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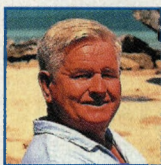
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Teddy Tucker

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Margaret Rule

Maritime Archaeologist, Lecturer and Author



Dr. Margaret Rule is Research Director of Mary Rose Trust in England. She was the marine archaeology director for the Trust which raised King Henry VII's flag ship the "Mary Rose".

Emory Kristoff

National Geographic Society photographer, Ocean Explorer, and Titanic Research Contributor



Employed with National Geographic since 1963, Emory Kristof is on the leading edge of deep water photography. Team leader of Titanic IMAX Expedition. His list of firsts in underwater exploration go on and on. Honored with the NOGI, ASMP Innovations in Photography, and the Explorer's Club Lowell Thomas awards.

Clifford Smith

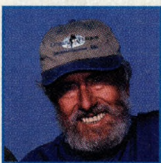
Director of Conservation and Underwater Archaeology, Bermuda Maritime Museum



Served as summer fellow at Woodshole Oceanographic Institute's Deep Submersion Lab. & worked on the Pensacola Shipwreck Survey for the sunken spanish galleon, Emanuel Point. Clifford Smith is a leader in maritime archaeology. He has explored countless wrecks of Bermuda & continues to document his research in numerous publications & journals.

Jean-Michel Cousteau

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Explorer, environmentalist, educator, film producer: for more than four decades Jean-Michel Cousteau has used his vast and varied experiences to communicate to people of all nations and generations his love and concern for our water planet. He has been honored with numerous awards and distinctions for his achievements and lifelong contributions.

Ellsworth Boyd

Shipwreck Expert and contributing editor to Skin Diver magazine



Ellsworth Boyd is Professor Emeritus for the College of Education, Towson University in Maryland. An authority on shipwrecks, he has been diving, lecturing, and writing for many years and has been published in several dive publications. He is the writer of the popular monthly column in Skin Diver magazine, Wreck Facts.

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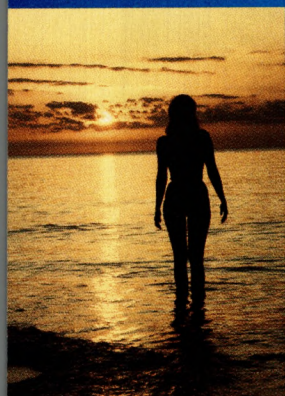


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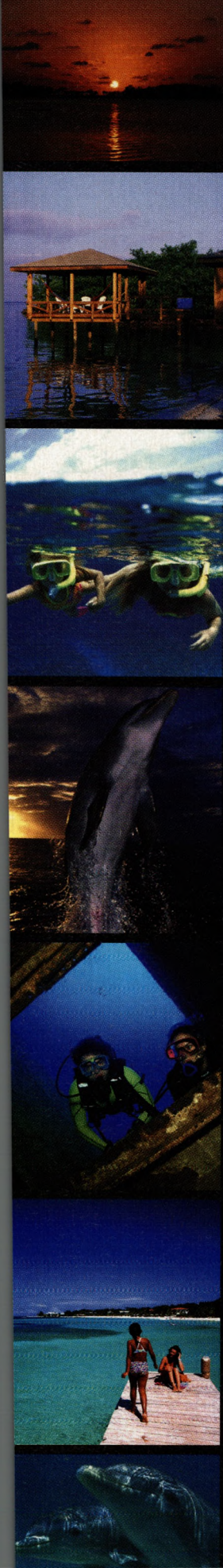


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• Find out about *Skin Diver* events in Cabo San Lucas, Roatan, Bermuda, Bahamas and more!

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ABOUT THE COVER:

Nose-to-nose with a curious cuttlefish in Indonesia's rich waters.

PHOTO: LIONEL & TALLY POZZOLI

Background photo:

A sun-burnt sky over Indonesia.

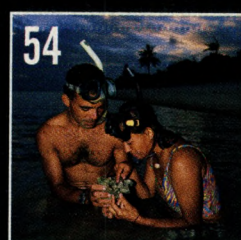
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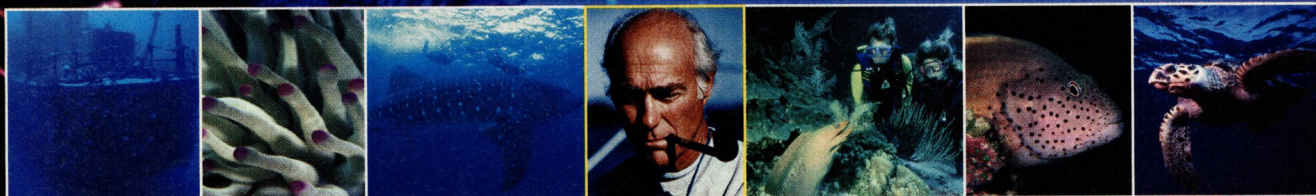
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A journalist by trade and scuba diver by nature, **CAT HOLLOWAY** began diving while living in Papua New Guinea in 1985. After a stint as a news reporter on Sydney metropolitan dailies, she served three years as editor of *Australian Scuba Diver* magazine—another fine excuse to travel and dive. And now, as a freelance journalist and cruise director/dive instructor aboard *Nai'a* in Fiji, she pursues the frustrating exhilaration of underwater photography as well as the instant gratification of digital video. So long as the dive makes a good story, she's happy. 🐟

In recent years, Cayman has become a whipping post for some hard-core tekkie divers, which gave **FRED GARTH** some pause before his latest assignment. Says Garth, "Did I dare tell my rebreathing,



Trimix diving buds that I was going to cushy Little Cayman rather than flying for three days on smelly airplanes to Meyangyanghangslo Atoll? My assignment had me on the trail of a dive club from the land of Jesse Ventura, Minnesota. So I brought my camera just in case any underwater wrestling matches broke out. None did. But those folks took to the water like dolphins, taking every advantage of their brief respite from the snow. Somehow I survived life on Little Cayman with my new friends from the Twin Cities area. But, I'm not so sure they survived me." 🐟

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IN SHAKESPEARE'S *HENRY V*, THE CHARACTER CHORUS OPENS THE ACTION WITH THE WORDS, "O, for a muse of fire, that would ascend the brightest heaven of invention." In these words, Chorus is making an appeal for inspiration, but not just any old inspiration—great inspiration. The kind that ignites the mind in a raw flurry of curiosity and wonder, seeking to define that which defies boundaries. It is these words that burn their way through this issue. An issue that appeals to a basic, primal nature at the core of each of us: The need to explore, discover and understand our blue planet. To that end, we have an exclusive tale of the trials and triumphs an unlikely band of scientists and laymen encounter, while on a 23-day exploratory cruise through the extremely remote Phoenix Islands. We even trumped *National Geographic* on this story, which says a lot about the kind of magazine we're putting out. We thrive on bringing you dive discoveries and stories that

Discovering Your Muse of Fire



inspire you to get wet and dream big. And you'll hardly find a better storyteller than the inimitable Cat Holloway, who lives the wet and insatiably inquisitive life day in and day out from her "muse of fire," the Fiji-based live-aboard *Nai'a*.

And what would discovery be without legacy? New sites need names, right? Ten lucky divers tagged along with inveterate explorers Stuart and Michele Westmorland on a discovery dive around the Komodo Islands, and did just that: named their own sites—Gary's Bamboo Shark Point; Mary's Mixmaster. Each time these divers dipped their

masks in the water, they saw an uncharted undersea world, as fish and scuba diver had their first introductions at these sites. The stories told after the dives, were the first. How many other recreational sport lifestyles include describing a site in your logbook that you were the first person to explore? Well...none. And when it comes to inspiration, to seeking "the brightest heaven of invention," all divers need do is look to the sea, gear up and get in. 🐟

TY SAWYER, EDITOR

The Ocean Understands:

Thursday

... feel the chill of the cold water against your spine. It's dark down here... Where you are it's always night... You've missed it again... It's time to go back... Only fifty-eight minutes left... Most people wouldn't understand... Most people are at home watching T.V.

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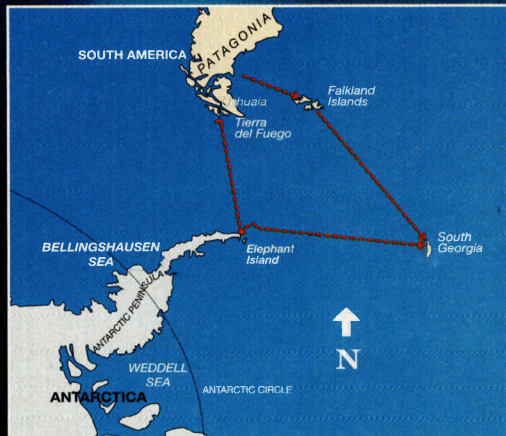
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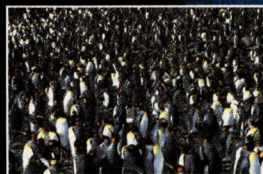


Amos Nachoum a renowned expedition leader, has led *National Geographic* expedition teams with Dr. Eugenie Clark, Dr. Sylvia Earle and astronaut Buzz Aldrin. His award winning photography has appeared in more than 500 publications worldwide.



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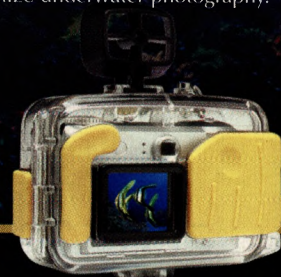


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LETTERS

Readers Speak Out

Heavy Petting

It was wonderful to see you writing about shark feeding in such a good light, especially after the bad press that it has taken recently. I agree that the Bahamas is the world center for shark feeding, and the many companies that offer the



experience really do show how misunderstood sharks are.

I go on vacation to the Bahamas several times a year with my family and alternate between islands each time, so I have witnessed the many different shark-feeding styles. I was surprised, therefore, when Xanadu was given

such a small part of the article, even though you had one of their feeders on the front cover. For me Xanadu stands out from the other operations in the Bahamas. ...I remember Wilfred (the feeder on the cover of your May issue), and he was able to put on an incredible show. However, last month I went on a shark feeding dive with my oldest son at Xanadu. They have a new feeder

there, a young guy. I was amazed at what he was able to do with the sharks, and he brought them so close—while still maintaining complete safety. I would love to see this talented young man featured in *Skin Diver* in the future. Keep up the good work guys.

—John Smith, via e-mail



A Class Act

I wanted to express my thanks and congratulations to the *Skin Diver* staff for a wonderful experience during the Kona Classic. I had a great time socializing with you and your team, diving with the operators and dive guides, and competing with my fellow comrades in the photo contest.

Skin Diver organized an informative, interesting and pleasurable diving and photography event. ...There were so many good points, so much fun, and so many friendly people that it's hard to know where to begin expressing all the pleasantries.

The greatest pleasures came from the camaraderie on the dive boats and the photo shows from the pros, but there were so many other enjoyable events such as...the awards banquet

with the children and Wyland, and the joint thrills of looking over photographs together with the other contestants, absorbing the comments and critiques and relishing in the open compliments expressed by the pros and *Skin Diver* staff members.

Even though I'm back to work, the only thing constantly on my mind is diving, underwater photography and reminiscing over all the Hawaiian fun.... The photo pros were all kind, friendly, and informative. In particular, I received great advice from Dave



Fleetham and Doug Perrine. However, the best advice for me was simple advice I received from Marty Snyderman. I guess sometimes it takes such a golden opportunity to meet with and dive with a pro to really have such great advice finally sink into one's mind.

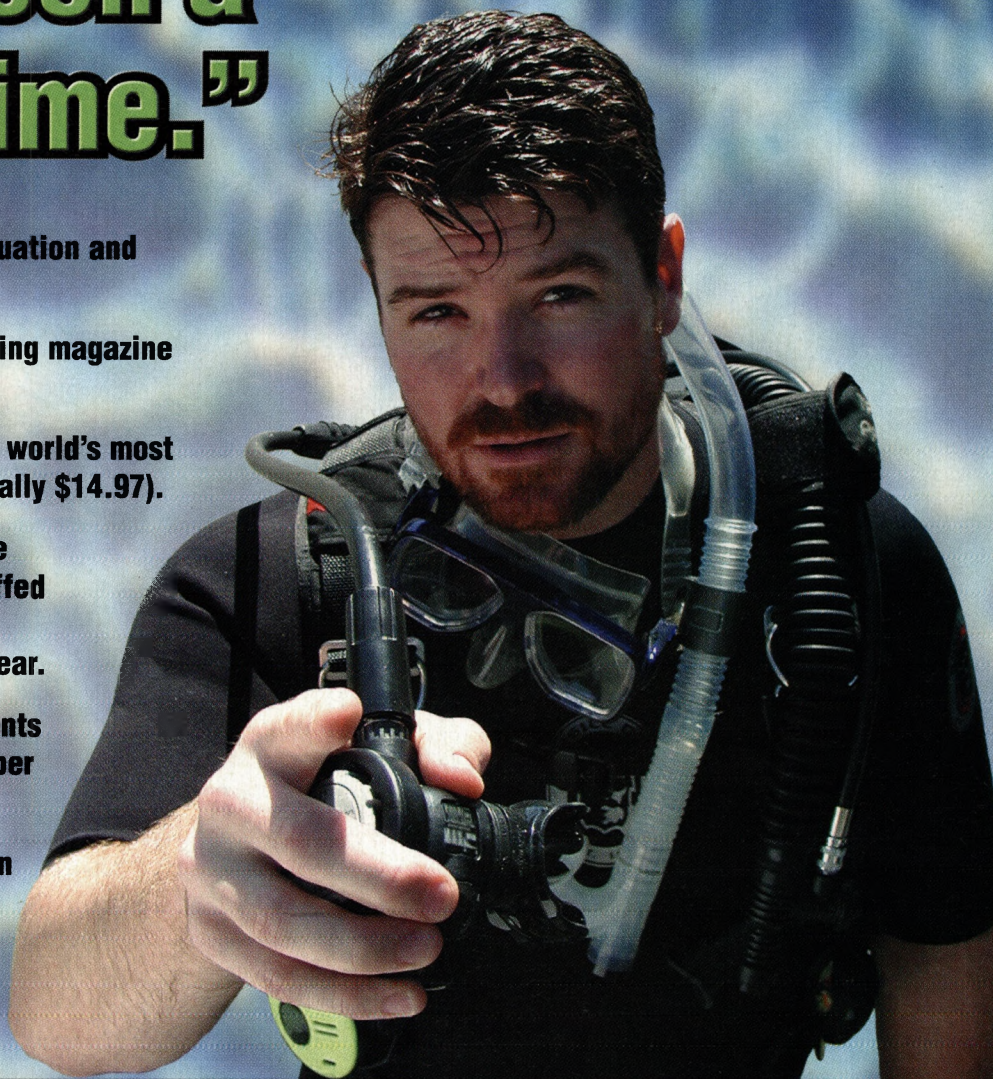
...It was all such a great and absorbing time that I am sure this event, as well as your other photo events, will greatly expand in participation, although this grouping seemed just right.

Again, thank you for everything....

—Charles R. Douglas, via e-mail

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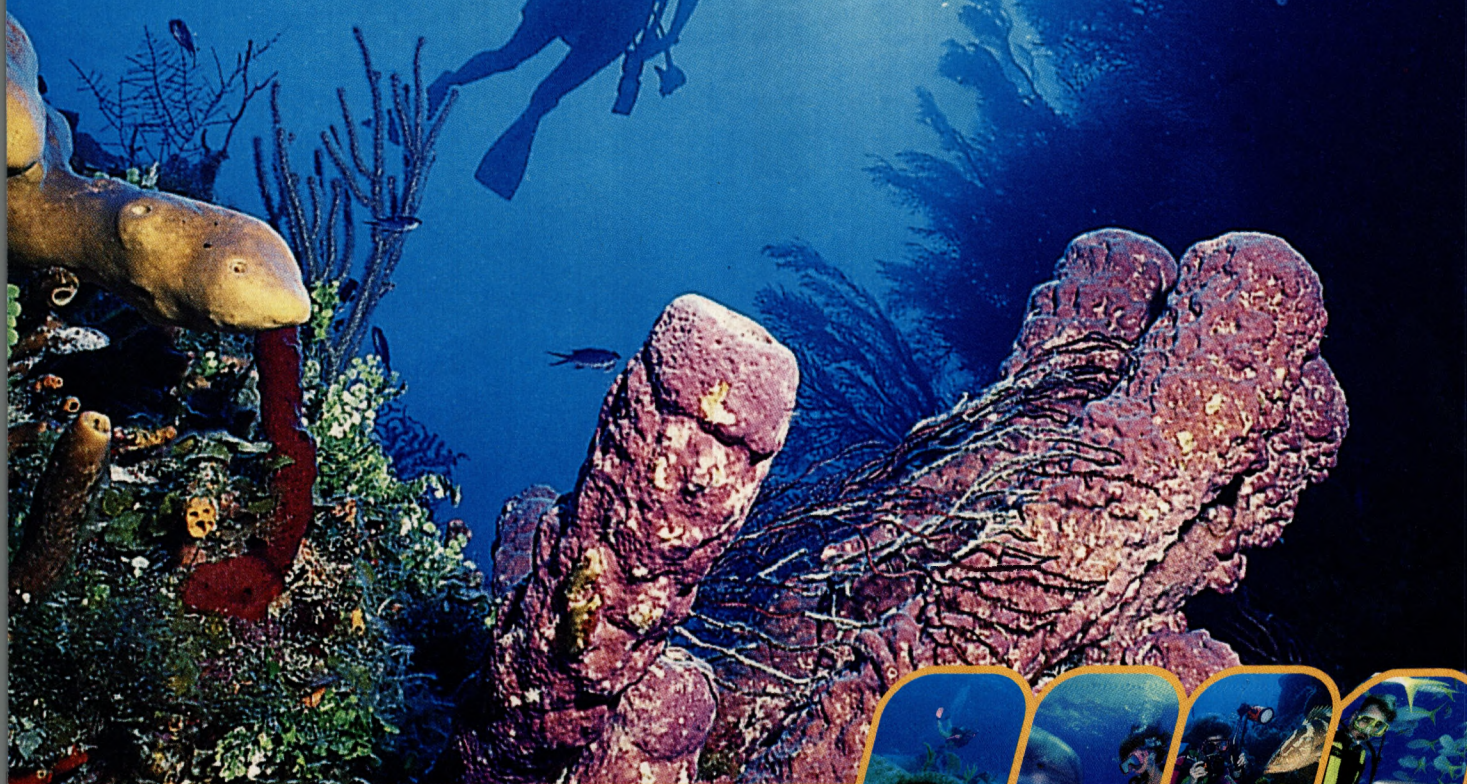


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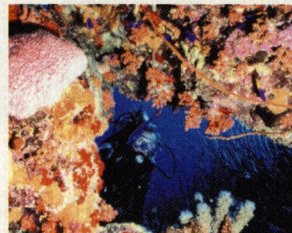


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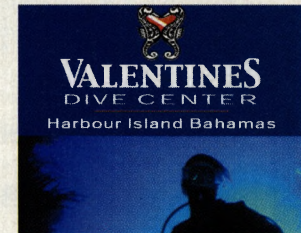


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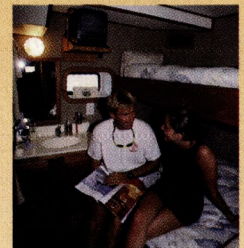


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Going...going...gone?

Countdown to DISASTER?

GLOBAL WARMING, DEFORESTATION, COASTAL DEVELOPMENT, overfishing, dynamite, cyanide, pollutants, sand mining, harvesting for saltwater aquariums.... These reckless agents of death

require clear, clean, warm (70 to 85°F), relatively shallow (primarily above 250 feet) and consistently moving saltwater to survive. Even such perfect environmental conditions yield slow growth, typically less than one inch per year.

"Hotspots" of the world, where coral reefs are most at risk (ranked according to level of threat).

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Philippines | 7. Southern Japan, |
| 2. Gulf of Guinea Islands | Taiwan and Southern |
| 3. Sunda Islands | China |
| 4. Southern Mascarene | 8. Cape Verde Islands |
| Islands | 9. Western Caribbean |
| 5. Eastern South Africa | 10. Red Sea and Gulf of |
| 6. Northern Indian Ocean | Arden |

continue to fuel the countdown. How long will it be before the remaining time runs out? Will any living creature remain?

Coral reefs are formed by the accumulated exoskeletons of tiny animals, known as colonial coral polyps. These corals

By supporting almost 1,000,000 species of plants and animals (over 30 percent of all marine fish species), coral reefs are among the most biologically diverse ecosystems on Earth. And these invaluable condominiums of nature parallel almost 17 percent of the world's coastlines, thereby protecting the corresponding shores from storms and accelerated erosion. In addition, the majority of all coral reefs are located in the waters of developing countries. These countries are highly dependent upon the reefs for food, raw materials and tourism.

(continued on page 25)

CATCH & COOK

Survivor superchef Keith Famie creates a Polynesian feast out of Spiny Lobsters in Bora Bora

JAMES MICHENER CALLED IT THE most beautiful island on earth, and though there's a number of contenders to that particular crown, there's no question that the fish-rich, super-warm and crystal-clear lagoons of Bora Bora make it

among the world's top spots for an easy and eventful recreational dive.

I experienced Bora Bora as one leg of a stupendous Polynesian adventure that took me to Tahiti, Moorea and a number of tiny, uninhabited islands scattered throughout the South Seas. Most are surrounded by spectacular coral reefs, which in turn house the shallow, picturesque lagoons that are home to more than 500 species of tropical fish, including the massive, graceful Manta Rays.

But as large as they are, Mantas are great dive companions and

MOOREA ISLAND SPINY LOBSTER GLAZE Serves 4

4 (6 ounce) spiny lobster tails, split in half

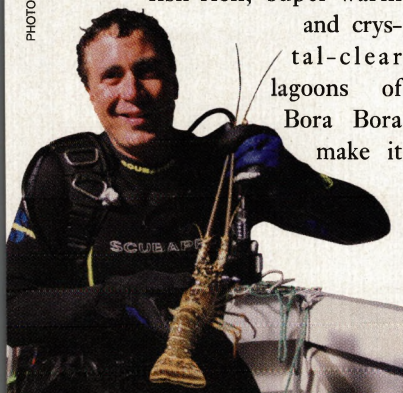
GLAZE:	1 cup pineapple juice
1 cup coconut milk, freshly	1 cup pineapple, chopped
squeezed from grated coconut	½ cup orange marmalade
1 lime, juiced	½ tsp. cayenne pepper
½ cup cilantro, chopped	1 tsp. salt

PROCEDURE:

1. Preheat outdoor barbecue grill.
 2. In a food processor, blend all of the glaze ingredients for 10 to 15 seconds.
 3. Place the lobster tails in glass dish with meat side up.
 4. Pour the glaze over lobster tails and let marinate for 20 minutes.
 5. Grill the lobster tails meat side down, turning as needed.
 6. Turn the lobster tails over after 3 to 5 minutes and baste with remaining glaze.
- The lobster tails are finished when meat is firm and opaque. Serve immediately.

(continued on page 25)

PHOTOS: (DISASTER) A. SCOTT JOHNSON; (C&C) JOE VAUGHN



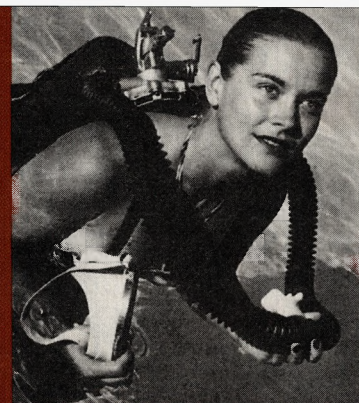
Zale Parry A Star That Keeps Shining Brighter

THANKS TO HER STARRING ROLE IN THE TV SERIES *Sea Hunt*, Zale Parry became one of the most well-known celebrities in scuba diving in the 1950s. But it took much more than her gorgeous face and figure for the “damsel in distress” to remain in the spotlight for the next 50 years. Zale, an inaugural member of the Women Divers Hall of Fame (WDHOF), began scuba diving in 1951, and she is still at the top of her long and distinguished career.

Zale was a pioneer skin diver in the 1940s, and an early

underwater equipment tester for Scientific Underwater Research Enterprises in 1953. Zale also helped run the first civilian hyperbaric chamber for divers in California. In 1954, she set a woman's depth record to 209 feet, and became the third female

instructor to graduate from the L.A. County UICC program. That same year, Zale made her screen debut in *Kingdom of the*



Sea, a Jack Douglas Production, which was shown in 70 countries and had a successful run of several years.

Besides her diving expertise, Zale's artistic talents are manifold—from acting to photography to writing. An accomplished underwater photographer, Zale co-founded the International Underwater Film Festival in 1957. In 1960, she became the first elected woman president of the U/W Photographic Society. From the 1950s through the 1990s, Zale worked as an actress and underwater stuntwoman in Hollywood. Her credits include, *Kingdom of the Sea*, *Sea Hunt*, *GE Theatre*, *Wagon Train*, *Peter Gunn*, over two dozen television commercials and more. She also appeared on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* several times.

Zale recently published a book with Al Tillman entitled *Scuba America Vol. I, The Human History of Sport Diving in America*, and is already busy working on Volume II. Zale is also a recipient of the NOGI Award for Distinguished Service, DEMA's Reaching Out Award, the Women's Scuba Association Scuba Diver of the Year Award and the Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Education Award. In 2001, Zale was made a “Lifetime Ambassador at Large” by The Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences. In 2002, she was inducted into the Cayman Island International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame and received the Beneath the Sea Diver of the Year Award. Zale has been an ardent supporter of WDHOF since its inception in 1999: “The Women Divers Hall of Fame has a fire within for adventure because of its members' enthusiasm, energy, education and excitement. We are all sisters in scuba.” —Hillary Vidars, Ph.D.

PHOTO: COURTESY WDHOF

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Countdown to DISASTER?

(continued from page 23)

Historically, government officials and even many scientists have argued that marine species are unlikely to become extinct in response to external pressures due to the ocean's great expanse. However, recent studies have not only proven such theories to be wrong, but also potentially fatal by promoting attitudes and policies that hinder vital conservation efforts.

A new study by the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science (CABS) at Conservation International identifies the world's top 10 coral reef hotspots. Hotspots are defined as regions that are exceptionally rich in endemic species, under extreme threat of destruction and thus species extinction.

In an unseemly marriage of destruction, eight of the top 10 marine hotspots are adjacent to land-based hotspots. Apparently, the same agents and activities that devastate fragile terrestrial habitats also destroy those in the ocean. If immediate and substantial conservation efforts are not instituted, the extinction of both marine and land species may occur.

Over 25 percent of the world's coral reefs have already been extinguished or severely damaged by those escalating influences that keep the timer counting down to destruction. In 1998 alone, the most powerful El Niño and La Niña climatic changes on record killed or seriously wounded over 16 percent of the world's reefs. The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network's "Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2000" report estimated that 60 percent of all reefs will be gone by 2030 if the current rates of decline are not stemmed.

Marine parks; enforceable international laws designed to greatly reduce fossil fuel and fluorocarbon emissions; increased world wide resources to protect against overfishing, illegal fishing (dynamite, cyanide, gill nets, etc.) and harmful live species harvesting; and rigid coastal and urban development restrictions might stop or slow the countdown. But, for now, the timer keeps ticking. 🐟 —A. Scott Johnson

CATCH & COOK

(continued from page 23)

don't carry much weight at the dinner table. For that, I arranged a night dive off the Bora Bora's north coast to search the reef's cracks and crevices for spiny lobsters. If your hand is swift enough, you can grab them as they flee backwards through the water. Catching lobster this way is not merely a move for show-offs; it's ecologically sound. Too much equipment, and you

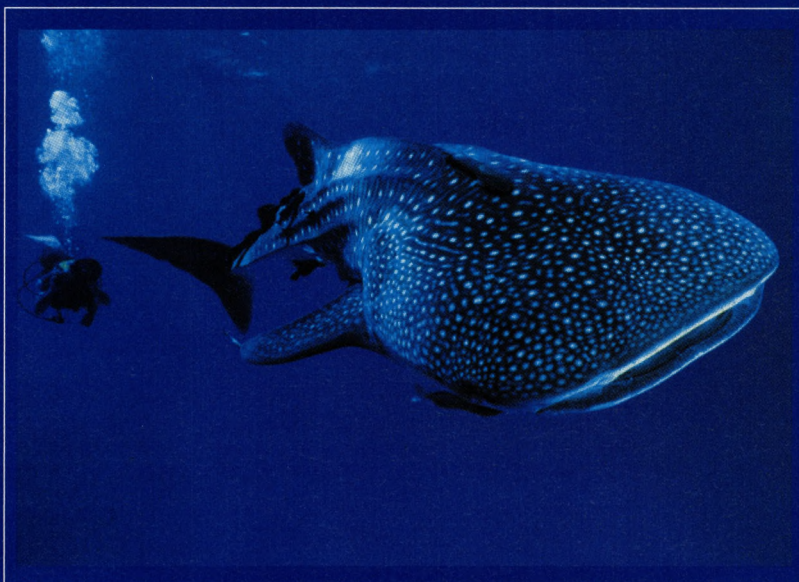
risk damaging the fragile reef.

I used the four lobsters we landed as the centerpiece for a

traditional Polynesian barbecue, cooked beachside in the underground oven known as an *ahima'a*. In addition, I roasted a suckling pig and a variety of native fruits and vegetables (breadfruit, taro, plantain), and found a group of gorgeous dancers and talented musicians who graced the feast with their incomparable South Seas magic. 🐟

—Chef Keith Famie

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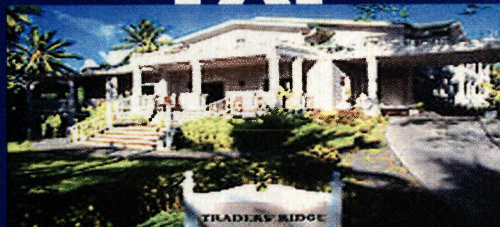
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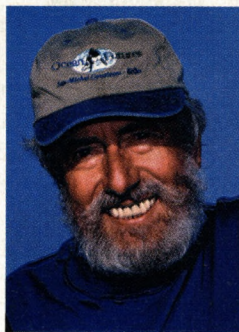
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IT IS NOW COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT sharks are in decline worldwide. What is less well known is that highly publicized efforts to protect them are going nowhere. Earlier this month, the Animals Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) met in Costa Rica. It should have been a triumphant occasion. After all, shark conservation has been a priority since 1994. In that year, CITES first requested that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) gather information on sharks so that a plan of action could be devised.

That plan, the International Plan of Action (IPOA), is now part of the agency's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Other

agencies soon jumped on the bandwagon. Several species are now listed in Annex I of the United Nations



We as a society can also help by continuing to advocate on behalf of sharks. This is where divers come in.

Convention Law of the Sea. And the Whale Shark is listed in Appendix II of the Convention on Migratory Species. But as the CITES meeting was informed, few countries are implementing the actions required by these noble documents. A report by the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Shark Specialist Group and the monitoring organization TRAFFIC paint a picture of inertia and disinterest:

- Of the 87 shark-fishing states that should already have implemented conservation plans, 47 don't even intend to draw them up.

- Of the 29 major shark-fishing nations, only one has prepared a Shark Assessment Report.

- Of the 125 nations that import shark fins to Hong Kong, only 29 claim to have implemented the IPOA in some form, but 24 of those

Sharks Need More Than Words

BY JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU

ENVIRONMENT



Sharks are being hunted as never before.

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ENVIRONMENT

cannot yet make the plan "available for public consultation."

While bureaucrats drag their feet, fishermen are busy catching between 100 and 200 million sharks per year. Considering that half of all sharks killed die as unregulated bycatch, the real toll is probably higher. The IUCN reports that 79 species are either critically endangered or threatened.

I confess to being confounded by these numbers. Several countries, including the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom, prohibit the killing of several species within their territorial waters. But when it comes to collecting census data on sharks—the necessary prelude to real protection—there is no movement.

That makes me think that the ball is

protect sharks. These are useful, realistic steps.

We as a society can also help by continuing to advocate on behalf of sharks. This is where divers come in.

Protecting sharks is a hard sell, but it is not impossible. Over the last decade, I have been involved with several major projects involving sharks, including a year-long expedition to South Australia to film Great Whites; a survey of a program in the Caribbean that allows tourists to hand-feed reef sharks in open water; and a filming venture in South Africa, where I shared the water with Great White sharks, outside the cage, wielding only a billy. I had the unique and indescribable honor of taking a brief ride on the back of a 13-foot female shark, and lived to tell the tale.

Wherever I have gone, I have seen people rediscovering sharks for themselves. They are learning that sharks

As our representatives underwater, divers can help us all learn something important by working to protect these animals. The lesson of the shark is more than monetary. It is also ethical. To save any predator—not only sharks, but lions, tigers, bears or wolves—is to exercise humility.

in the FAO's court. Part of the problem is that the FAO remains committed to voluntary information gathering and compliance by individual nations. When big business is involved, voluntary conservation schemes are usually worthless.

The FAO must lean on fishing states more forcefully to implement the IPOA, and crack down on illegal fishing. And CITES should play a more active role. TRAFFIC has suggested that CITES—until now a mere observer—could help implement the IPOA, work with the World Customs Organization on scrutinizing shark products, and assist those countries that are making a sincere effort to

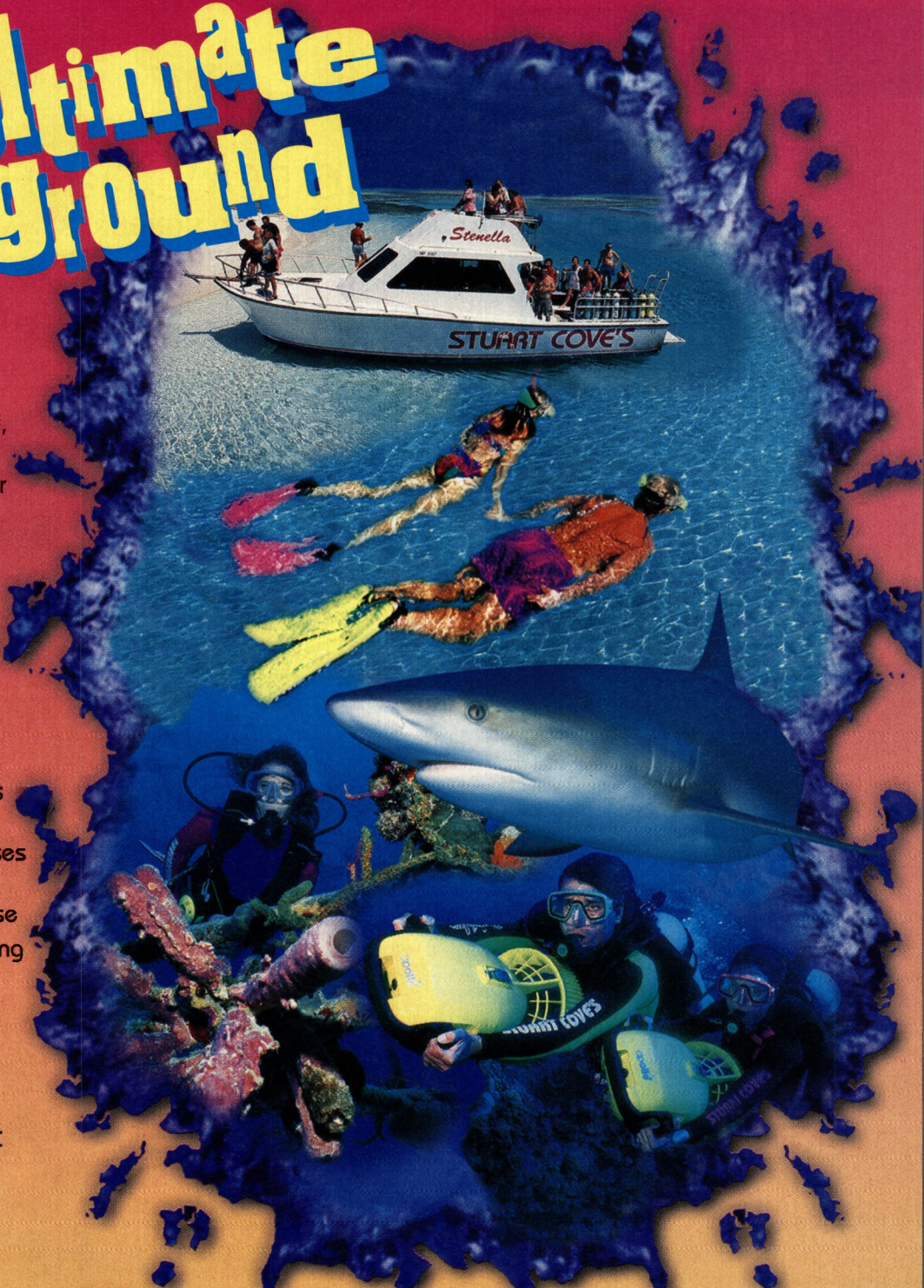
are not psychotic murderers, but methodical predators who play important role in marine ecosystems. And the more we get to know sharks, the more we appreciate intangibles such as their beauty, their completeness, their magnificence.

As our representatives underwater, divers can help us all learn something important by working to protect these animals. The lesson of the shark is more than monetary. It is also ethical. To save any predator—not only sharks, but lions, tigers, bears or wolves—is to exercise humility. And this is something we must do if we are to live long or well on this Earth. 🐟

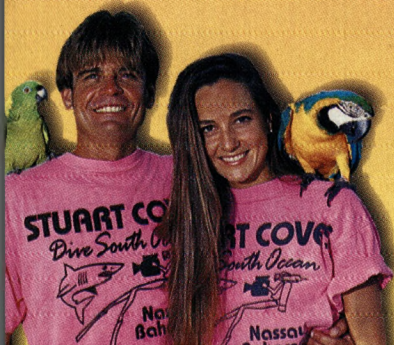
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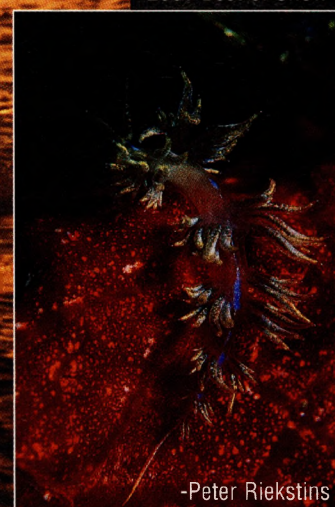
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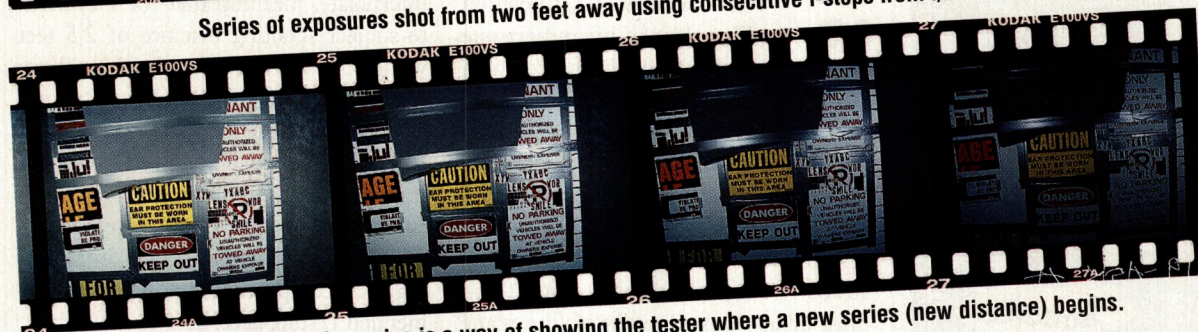
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Series of exposures shot from two feet away using consecutive f-stops from f/2.8 to f/22.



The hand before the series is a way of showing the tester where a new series (new distance) begins.

A Little Testing Can Go A Long Way!

BY MARTY SNYDERMAN

I go on several extended dive trips a year and you'd think my photography would continually improve, but I just don't get good exposures on a consistent basis and I feel stuck. Help!—Joe S., Houston, TX

I AM CERTAIN THAT JOE IS NOT ALONE. I AM ALSO SURE THAT I can help, but I can't do it alone. I need a little cooperation from Joe, or you, if you are experiencing the same dilemma. I am not sure why underwater photographers rarely, if ever, practice our craft, but most of us don't. We function as if it is our birthright to be good at underwater photography. Golfers of all skill levels test clubs to see how far they hit the ball. Basketball players test and practice myriad techniques. So do salesmen, comics and singers. But many underwater photographers do not. That is too bad, because just a little practice and testing can go a long way toward enabling us to consistently get better results.

I believe most underwater photographers don't practice and test ways to get proper exposures with their strobes because they don't understand how to go about conducting the in-water sessions. So people end up getting into a pool or going on a dive with the intent of testing, but the tests are not methodically conducted. Instead the shooters expose a number of frames by using different f/stops and different power settings on strobes, but the tests are too randomly conducted to allow them any precise conclusions that are meaningful for future shoots. I think a lot of us are guilty of this one. I certainly was in my early days.

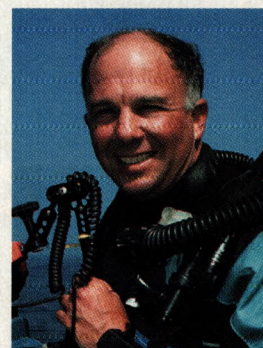
How do you set up and run some meaningful exposure tests that will give you confidence and help you consistently get good exposures when shooting in the future? Here is what I do. You can copy my tests or do something similar. When I get a new strobe(s), the first thing I do is run some exposure tests. I want

to be sure that it is my strobe(s) that I am testing, and that it is not being over powered by sunlight, so I run the tests in an indoor pool, on very cloudy day, late in the afternoon or at night. To start, I hang a large, 6-foot-wide by 4-foot-tall white plastic board in a swimming pool. I cover the top one-third of the board with a gray cloth that has the same reflectance as a gray card. Yes, if you are curious, the cloth in the fabric store was tested with a light meter and gray card before it was purchased. And yes, that was a first for the fabric salesperson.

Toward the edges of the board, I attach some plastic signs with different sizes of lettering—I bought a number of signs with different sized and different colored lettering that say things like "No Soliciting," "No Parking," "Beware of Dog," etc. at my local hardware store—and I attach a large color chart, or several signs with different colors, toward the center on the board.

Then I get in the pool and physically measure and mark intervals of 1 foot, 2 feet, 3 feet, 4 feet, 5 feet and 6 feet from the board with weights that I place on the bottom of the pool. At this point, I am ready to shoot some film.

Use slide film, not print film, and be sure each roll has the same ISO. I suggest running the tests with 100 ISO film. Be sure to have the film processed at a professional



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lab. And be sure to "slate" each roll of film, meaning that you want to use the first frame on the roll to identify each roll. Have someone on the surface take some notes, saying exactly what you did on each roll of film.

With the strobe(s), I position the film plane of my camera one foot away from the board, with my strobe(s) positioned to the side(s) and slightly above my camera. I know that the results vary according to my strobe-to-subject distance, not the film plane-to-subject distance. I certainly can conduct my tests by measuring strobe-to-subject distances, but I think most of us think in terms of film plane (camera)-to-subject distances.

With the strobe set on the full-power setting, I shoot a series of exposed frames using the most wide open f/stop (roughly f/2.8) to the most closed down f/stop (roughly f/22) without missing a single f/stop in the series. At the end of the series, I expose one frame with my hand over the lens so that I will know that one series of exposures has been completed and I am ready to start a new series of exposures from a new distance.

I repeat this procedure from 2 feet

Your finished chart should look something like the following:

FOR FULL-POWER AND ISO 100 FILM

1 foot	2 feet	3 feet	4 feet	5 feet	6 feet
f/22	f/16	f/11	f/8	f/5.6	f/4

For in-between distances, you can interpolate, meaning that for a camera-to-subject shooting distance of 2.5 feet with the strobe tested for the chart above set on full-power, you would want to use an f/stop between f/16 and f/11.

Use the information gained from your tests and, of course, bracket your exposures to get the proper exposure in a real life shooting scenario. Bracket by shooting each composed frame at the recommended f/stop, according to your chart, then shooting the exact same frame one f/stop more wide open and one f/stop more closed down; somewhere in there, you should have the proper exposure. It is important to bracket because in a real life setting you can't always be so sure of your shooting distance, nor can you be certain about whether given subjects are of average reflectance or if they will reflect or absorb more light than a photographic gray card.

Running the tests will only require a few rolls of film and some time to acquire

...just a little practice and testing can go a long way toward enabling us to consistently get better results.

away and then from 3 feet, 4 feet, 5 feet and 6 feet with the strobe(s) on full power. After I have completed all of the series, I shoot every f/stop from 2, 4 and 6 feet away with the other power settings. You can interpolate to get the results for those power settings from shooting distances of 1 foot, 3 feet and 5 feet, or you can run the tests from these distances.

When having the film processed, make sure to have the lab "process only," or "process, but do not mount" so that you get the rolls of film back in strips instead of in a box of unnumbered slides.

and make the shooting board. But the lessons learned from this simple test will give you a world of "exposure confidence" and good results every time you shoot from that point on, whether in Fiji, California, Cayman or Canada.

In addition, if you make the board so that you can frame lettering of different sizes in the corners of your frames, then the very same tests will let you see how sharp your testing lens is or isn't at various f/stops.

A little testing and practice can go a long way indeed. 🐠

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If no entries are received for the last monthly drawing, then the final monthly prize will be awarded from among all eligible entries received in the previous months. WINNER NOTIFICATION: All random drawings will be conducted under supervision of an independent judging organization whose decisions are final and binding. Each winner will be notified by mail, or phone or email within 14 days after the drawing. To be declared a winner, all potential winners must complete & return an affidavit of eligibility and liability/publicity release within 14 days of date specified on notification, or an alternate winner will be selected. Travel companion must execute a travel release prior to travel. Winner and travel companion are responsible for obtaining proper documentation (i.e., passports) prior to travel. Prizes will be awarded within 30 days after prize notification or receipt of properly executed affidavit. 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Kids

Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman, Resort Sports.

BILL GREENWOOD OF HOUSTON, TX, visited Bonaire and asks about a “wild story” concerning *La Machaca*, a small boat that rests keel up on a shallow slope in front of Capt. Don’s Habitat. You asked for it, so here it is—straight from Capt. Don Stewart’s storehouse of yarns.

“*La Machaca* is the Spanish name for the national bird of Brazil. In the 1920s, a small, speedy craft slipped out of a Brazilian port at midnight, transporting an illegal cargo of large ‘Spanish flies.’ The captain was taking his cargo to Trinidad, where it was to be sold as an aphrodisiac. But a Brazilian gunboat intercepted the vessel and riddled it with machine-gun bullets, the holes still visible on the inverted hull of the wreck. *La Machaca* eluded the Brazilian military, but the combination of heavy seas and firearms damage eventually proved too much for her. The captain had to steer her into what is now Habitat’s Harbor, where she sank. The Spanish flies escaped and attacked a school of small Yellowtail

Damselfish. Soon, an army of angry Sergeant Majors swarmed to the rescue, and like piranhas, devoured the flies. In the melee, the Yellowtail

La Machaca

BY ELLSWORTH BOYD

Damselfish and Sergeant Majors became impregnated with the aphrodisiac from the Spanish flies, which has been passed down from generation to generation. As a result, today, when a diver is nipped by a Yellowtail Damselfish or Sergeant Major, the diver must make love within six hours or face imminent death. That’s why *La Machaca* is so popular with male divers. You see them there all the time, offering themselves as human sacrifices, hoping their female companions will cure them when they return to shore.”

JANET TAYLOR OF LEESBURG, FL, asks if a treasure called the “Bishop’s Jewels” was found among the remains of one of the Spanish galleons that sank off the Middle Keys in 1733.

Yes, in the early 1990s, Jack Haskins, a retired airline pilot from Islamorada, FL, made an amazing discovery on a wreck that had been picked over for years. Haskins was about four miles offshore, in 18 feet of water, when his detector signaled a hit in the sand not far



Bonaire

LA MACHACA

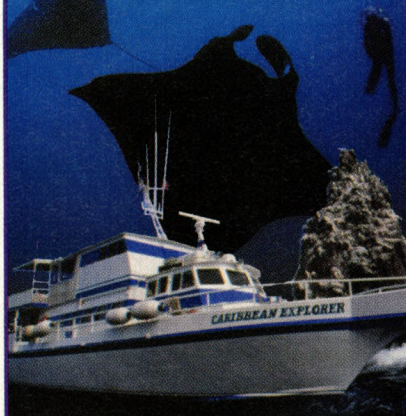
Venezuela

La Machaca.



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WRECKFACTS

from the main ballast pile of *El Capitana*. Gently fanning the sand, he uncovered a religious medallion made of gold and adorned with nine jewels. He calls it the "Bishop's Jewels," citing records that confirm the presence of a Bishop aboard most Spanish vessels of that period. In those days, religion played a significant role in the lives of the captain, crew and passengers, who were sailing from the New World to Spain.

Although a full value of the find was never determined, half a million dollars would be a conservative estimate.

IN MEMORIUM

On a more solemn note, it is with deep regret that friends and family report the loss of Bob Fleming, Arlington, VI, who died recently at age 83. He was an authority on shipwrecks and conducted most of Clive Cussler's maritime research for 20 years. Modest and humble, Fleming preferred to remain in the background, unheralded by his many accomplishments. He fought tenaciously for divers' rights to explore shipwrecks and testified at Congressional hearings on their behalf. Many researchers still use his books *A Primer for Shipwreck Research* and *Records for Skin Divers* and *An Informal Bibliography of Shipwreck Resources and Records for Divers*. Bob Fleming will be greatly missed by this writer, whom he befriended and advised for many years.

JOE KUJDA, VIA THE INTERNET, asks about the *Trade Wind* and the *Crystal*, two popular Lake Erie wrecks.

Georgann and Mike Wachter, authors of *Erie Wrecks* and *Erie Wrecks East*, say that both vessels "remain in beautiful condition." The *Trade Wind*, a three-masted bark built in 1853, sank a year later when she collided with the *Charles Napier* during a blinding snow storm off Long Point Cut. The bark carried 200 tons of railroad iron, 1,000 stoves and two lifeboats bound for Chicago, both labeled U.S. Government Property. Although the crew complained about the two bulky government lifeboats,

strapped down as deck cargo, these very same boats saved their lives. When their yawl boat was swept away in the collision, the crew launched the lifeboats and made it safely to shore. The *Trade Wind* lies eight miles off Long Point in 120 feet of water. The ship's wheel, capstan and deadeyes are scattered on the bottom, surrounded by iron rails and stove parts.

The *Crystal*, an unidentified ship named for its cargo of dishes found at the site, is sunk four miles away from the *Trade Wind*. The 120-foot-long vessel was also carrying wheat when it became a victim of one of the fierce storms that often build up off Long Point. The ship's wheel, wench and windlass are intact in 115 feet of water. Visibility on the *Crystal* and the *Trade Wind* averages 70 feet.

JIM CVITANOVICH, VIA THE INTERNET, is trying to identify his favorite wreck, sunk in 15 feet of water off Rocky Point, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA. He says it's located near the *Dominator*, a Greek freighter that ran aground in 1961, and thinks his mystery wreck might be the *Epping*.

Phil Bergeron, a California wreck sleuth, says the *Epping* is erroneously listed on a nautical chart and that Jim's vessel is the *Gratia*, a three-masted, steel hulled bark that ran aground in 1932. The remains of the ship, except for part of the hull that was detonated and salvaged for scrap, are broken up and scattered throughout thick kelp beds. The remains can be tracked by two large anchor chains that stretch out of the stern for about 100 feet through the kelp. Divers prefer calm waters when exploring the site, heeding the strong surges and rocky outcroppings that make it hazardous in rough weather. 🐟

Send your wreck questions to Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Rd., White Hall, MD 21161. Be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a personal reply. Ellsworth can also be e-mailed at ellsboyd@aol.com.

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Photo by Jim Cox

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Close encounters with friendly whales

IF YOU WATCHED TELEVISION IN THE early 1970s, you've probably seen marine cinematographers racing after whales in pursuit of dramatic nature footage. These chases usually continued until the animals were corralled or too tired to swim any further and allowed the camera crews to photograph them. At the time, nobody questioned the practice. Most of us were fascinated to have the opportunity to see

ing—or just enjoying—whales could be a whole lot easier if we let the whales come to us, on their own terms.

That's the idea behind "soft-in-water" encounters, a term coined for basically hanging out in the water with whales. It's not scuba diving, aggressive swimming or free diving. It's bobbing up and down in the sea, biding your time, and waiting peacefully for a curious, cooperative



whales up close, and gratified that people were finally trying to learn about these majestic animals, rather than trying to hunt them down.

Now, years later, knowledge about how to approach marine mammals has changed considerably. Scientists have learned that while aggressively approaching a large migrating marine mammal such as a whale might be dramatic photo opportunity, it reveals little about the natural behavior of the animal. After all, how at ease would you feel trying to outrun a crew of wild-eyed cameramen in a noisy speedboat? Fortunately, somewhere down the line, somebody realized that study-

whale to check you out. More important-ly, it's a whole philosophy that anyone, young or old, can apply to learning about and understanding nature. I recently put the technique to practice during a photo-graphic expedition near the Silver Bank, a world-famous marine sanctuary for Humpbacks Whales about 85 miles off the coast of the Dominican Republic. The idea of coaxing a 40-ton Humpback to me simply by doing nothing seemed a little odd, but when the first Humpback ap-proached, spun around, then returned again, I was converted.

I had been briefed about what to expect by Capt. Tom Conlin, a naturalist and

Master Diver Trainer aboard the Peter Hughes dive vessel *M/V Wind Dancer*. Since 1990, Tom has studied the behavior, movements, and attitudes of the North Atlantic Humpback Whale. Much of the information he gets is passed on to the College of the Atlantic and the Center for Coastal Studies for fluke IDs and behavioral studies. Tom has observed every conceivable movement: breaching, lob tailing, resting, courtship and mother and calf interaction. If there's anyone who knows what it takes to attract the curiosity of a whale, it's Tom.

Each night, Tom presented a slide show and a lecture aboard our vessel with tips to make the most of these soft-in-water encounters. Some whales, he said, will show little or no interest in the presence of man, while others will indicate their infatuation and curiosity by becoming very acrobatic. By spotting the right candidates and using the right encounter techniques, Tom said we would have a "high probability of turning a fly-by into a 5-minute to 10-hour encounter."

A soft-in-water encounter begins with snorkeling equipment. Whales navigate by acoustics and are very sensitive to sound, so reducing noise when entering the water is important. Once in the water, one rule in particular was strictly enforced: Never swim after a whale. Time and again, as soon as a person swam after a whale, the animal would turn away and disappear. By sticking to the soft-in-water encounter techniques, we were treated to hours of encounters with whales. Not in a chase mode, but rather two curious species quietly learning about each other.

All week long, we saw every conceivable type of whale behavior, up close and more fantastic than any of us could have imagined. I realize, of course, that it's not possible for everyone, particularly small children, to have a direct soft-in-water encounter with giant animals such as whales. But the lessons behind the practice have the potential to influence a whole new way of approaching nature. Having dived with whales in Hawaii for 20 years, this experience certainly was an eye opener for me, and I plan to use what I learned from my soft-in-water encounters in the way I interact with all marine life, large and small, in the future.

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Whether you need to cruise down the reef in a current, paddle out past the break or just load the boat and hit the throttles, there's a conveyance perfectly suited to your kind of diving. **by daryl carson**

Sellers of diver propulsion vehicles, sometimes called underwater scooters, will try and tell you their machines are of great practical value. *Conserve air! Dive in currents! Haul more stuff!* But, don't be fooled. These smooth words are only to ease your conscience and convince your spouse. Though DPVs can have some practical applications, they are really only bought for one reason—nothing else underwater is this much fun!

As all the very responsible divers reading this begin to clear their throats and look over the tops of their glasses, let it also be said that there are some sober realities to getting yanked over a reef, a wreck or through a cave, by a battery-powered propeller. It's easy to let a good time turn into rapid ascents, reef wrecking and marine life harassment. However, once you have a firm grip on a unit's operating parameters, there's nothing wrong with putting the hammer down and zooming off into the big wet blue. And fortunately, a number of models on the market make it very easy.

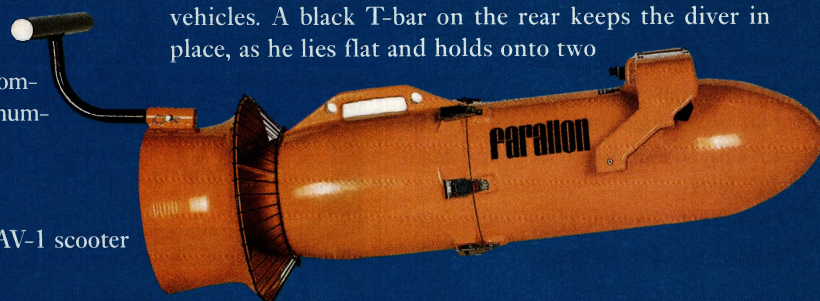
Apollo AV-1 Scooter

One of the grand features of the Apollo AV-1 scooter

is compactness. Angled handles near the nose make riding and controlling the AV-1 extremely intuitive, as well as forcing the rider to keep the propeller shroud beneath the torso, where thrust won't be unnecessarily defused into the body. Weighing in at 40 pounds on the surface, the unit's underwater weight is less than 1.5 pounds. Three speed settings are possible, with a top speed of 2.4 mph, which is plenty of punch for cruising into currents or playing with dolphins. Battery time will last up to one hour, and a great safety feature is the thermal sensor that automatically shuts down the motor at the first sign of high internal motor temperatures. Depth rated to 165 feet, there is also an auto slip clutch to save the drive system in case the propeller is obstructed. Apollo: (800) 231-0909 or www.apollosportsusa.com

Farallon MK-7

Although rumors are circulating that Farallon is producing a new tow-behind model, the company has long been known for its "ride-on" style of diver propulsion vehicles. A black T-bar on the rear keeps the diver in place, as he lies flat and holds onto two

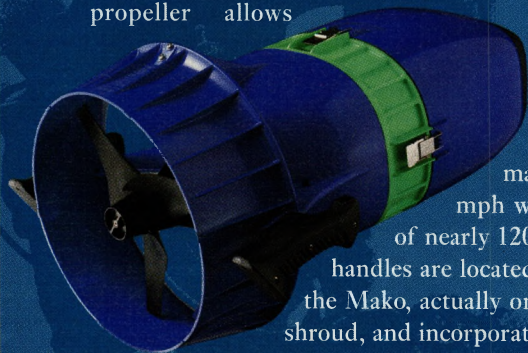


handles up front. A black toggle switch provides on/off capabilities, and a trigger on the handle engages the motor. (Other Farallon models also offer variable speed control.)

Running at a very solid 2.75 mph, the unit will travel approximately 10,500 feet (battery life of one hour) and to a depth of 400 feet. Steering the Farallon is simply a matter of leaning into turns and adjusting the position of one's fins. On land, this orange work horse weighs in at 80 pounds, however an aluminum dock cart is available to make transport easier. **Farallon: (770) 414-0550 or www.farallonusa.com**

Oceanic Mako

The Mako from Oceanic has long been a popular choice among serious scooter heads. A variable pitch propeller allows



the system to run at three possible speeds, the maximum at 2.7 mph with a run time of nearly 120 minutes. The handles are located at the rear of the Mako, actually on the propeller shroud, and incorporated into each is a trigger type on/off switch. Each switch is independent of the other, so one-handed operation is always possible. The Mako is constructed of high-impact Xenoy and depth rated to 180 feet. Many Mako users, and actually riders of similarly styled designs, have developed a method of riding by which a short triangle harness, made from two pieces of line, is used to clip the diver to the scooter. If the distance is properly set, the diver is then towed comfortably and only uses his arms to steer. **Oceanic: (510) 562-0500 or www.oceanicww.com**

Scubapro Seaglider

The Seaglider uses a design that places the propeller beneath the chassis. This completely avoids the temptation some models have of spitting water into your face or chest. It also makes it an ideal model for use by snorkelers, who can cruise along comfortably while remaining on the surface.

The Seaglider has slightly positive buoyancy, two pistol grip handles for steering and an extra handle on the nose, a nice feature when hauling the thing around topside. Battery life is 40 minutes (continuous run time) and the unit is depth rated to 180 feet. Finally, an automatic charger is included and the unit comes



in a protective roller case, which makes getting down the dock almost as easy as getting through the water. **Scubapro: (619) 402-1023 or www.scubapro.com**

SeaScooter

The SeaScooter is aimed more at the snorkeling market than divers, but with a depth rating of 50 feet, bubble blowers shouldn't ignore it all together, especially since it cruises at a fist-clenching 3.3 mph.

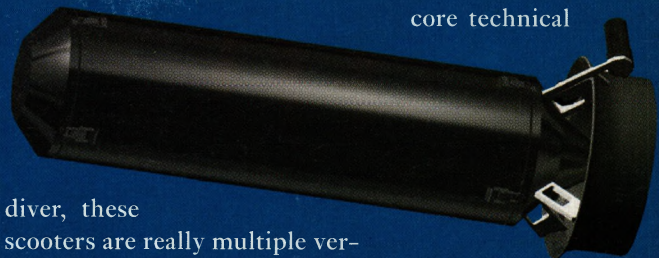


In keeping with its surface-friendly design, the SeaScooter is two pounds positively buoyant in the water, while tipping the scales at 45 pounds on dry land. The rechargeable battery is easily accessible through a rear hatch, and a special warning light notifies the user when 5 to 10 minutes of power remains (a nice feature if you don't want to be stranded down current from the boat). An optional dive flag is available, which mounts easily for topside use. **Zap World: (800) 251-4555 or www.seascooters.com**

Submerge UV

Submerge UV scooters are built to go deep, to stay long and to come back to the surface in one piece.

Engineered and aimed at the hard core technical



diver, these scooters are really multiple versions of the same machine. The UV-18, UV-26 and UV-38 all use the same drive system, with the larger models simply carrying additional batteries. The UV-26 will run at 2 mph for at least 90 minutes. Rated to 400 feet, they are designed to be used with a harness that tows the diver, while he steers using a unique motorcycle style handle. This controller cuts power to the motor when released and also has a cruise control and lock-off feature.

Speed and battery life depend on the model and pitch settings of the prop blades (there are nine), however, burn times of up to two hours are possible. The body is constructed of tough HDPE, and more than half an inch thick with internal bulkheads that both provide structural integrity and battery support. **Submerge: (610) 436-6250 or www.silent-submersion.com**

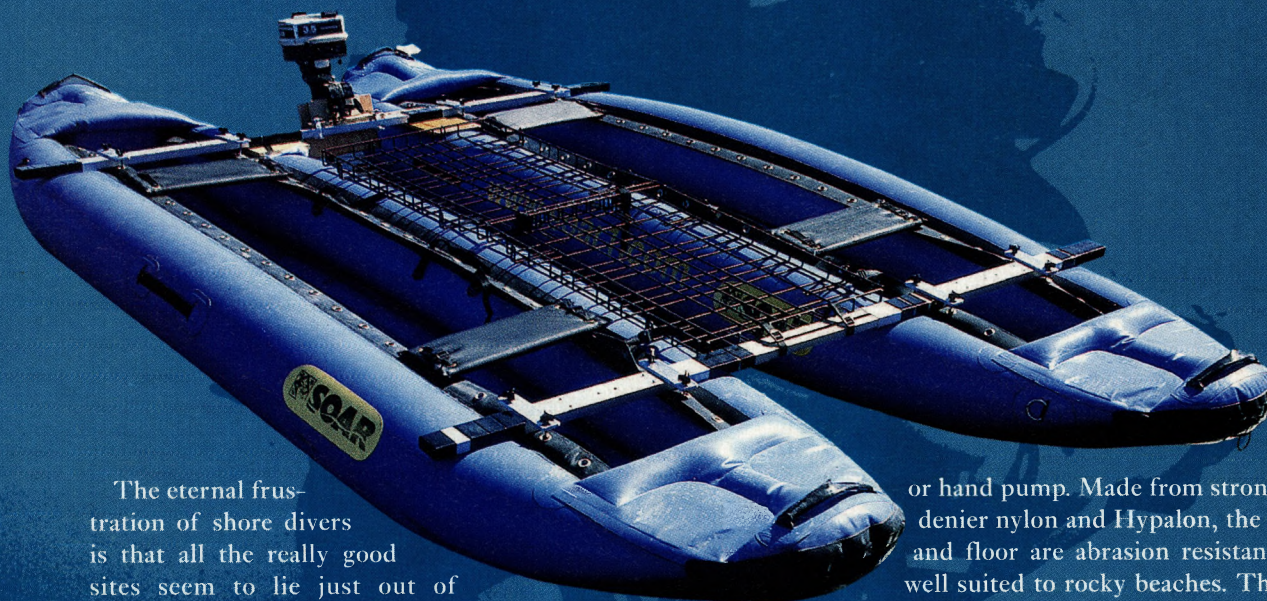
Torpedo 3500

One of the more affordable scooters on the market, the Torpedo comes in three models. At the top is the 3500, with a run time of 45 minutes at 3.5 mph. The makers opted for a fiberglass housing topped by a removable nose cone that offers access to the unit's sealed lead acid battery. Two aluminum handles extend along the body, and a magnetic switch is housed beneath the cushioned grips. The diver wears a small band on one hand and the unit is activated when held. Rated to 170 feet, the 3500 weighs 50 pounds (battery included) on



land, and is one pound negative in the water. The handles are placed along the centerline of the unit for minimal arm fatigue while in use. Also, the 7/8 inch handle diameter allows for the easy attachment of accessories, such as lights and

gauges. For divers that want to juice up their ride, the Torpedo can be run in tandem with another unit, for twice the power. Other goodies include a "positive buoyancy accessory" and a padded tote bag. Torpedo: (800) 489-6774 or www.torpedodpv.com



The eternal frustration of shore divers is that all the really good sites seem to lie just out of reach—too far to swim to, but close enough to shore that the charter boats never go there. Well, for all such haunted souls, there is salvation in the form of diving kayaks. These beauties greatly extend the shore diver's range by offering both easy (and cheap) transportation, as well as providing a stable and highly-visible dive platform. They're also great for families, fishing, free diving or just for being on the water. Load your gear, grab a buddy and paddle into nirvana.

Soar Inflatable Kayaks

Among the most versatile of human-powered watercraft, the inflatable boats by Soar are available in 12-, 14- and 16-foot lengths. When deflated, they roll up and easily fit in the trunk of a car, but are brought to life in just a few minutes with a foot

or hand pump. Made from strong 840 denier nylon and Hypalon, the tubes and floor are abrasion resistant and well suited to rocky beaches. The 16-foot model has a 1,000 pound load capacity, while weighing only 68 pounds.

A number of options also increase the Soar's utility. Lashing bars (pictured above with two 16-foot models) are available, as is an outboard transom. These are perfect for larger groups of divers or float trips. A repair kit, straps and double action hand pump are included with each boat. Soar: (800) 280-SOAR or www.soar1.com

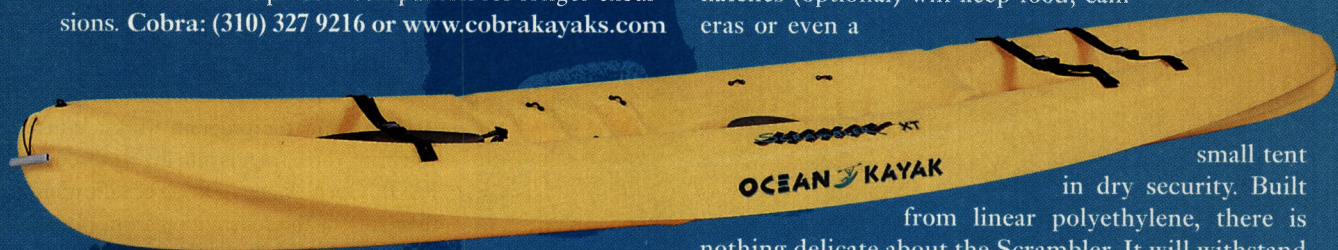
Cobra Fish 'n Dive Kayak

Twelve feet long by three feet wide, Cobra's sit-on-top dive kayak offers an incredibly stable platform for cruising while fully loaded with dive gear. A deep well in the stern provides ample storage for scuba equipment (up to three tanks) or tackle boxes. Rated to carry 600 pounds, the Fish 'n Dive can even be rigged with a trolling motor or small outboard for effortless cruising.



Rigidity and strength come from linear polyethylene. Molded foot rests provide comfort for any height paddler, and in addition to the one centrally located padded jumpseat, a smaller reversed companion jumpseat near the bow is available for a passenger. This space can also be used for additional storage. Optional hatches provide easy access to dry areas and make this Cobra a perfect companion for longer excursions. Cobra: (310) 327 9216 or www.cobrakayaks.com

are familiar with, and Ocean Kayak has been a strong supporter of bubble blowers. Their Scrambler XT is nice and roomy, with a molded well in the rear especially for holding a rigged set of dive gear. Padded seats (not shown) are adjustable and held in place by easy-to-use clips. Multiple foot holds are spaced for divers of all leg lengths to make paddling a breeze. And, storage hatches (optional) will keep food, cameras or even a



Ocean Kayak Scrambler XT

Sit-on-top (SOT) kayaks are the ones most divers

small tent in dry security. Built from linear polyethylene, there is nothing delicate about the Scrambler. It will withstand years of being dragged up and down beaches, hoisted atop cars and the general bangs and scratches that go with shore diving. Ocean Kayak: (800) 8-KAYAKS or www.oceankayak.com

boats

In the world of marine craft, there are many variations of design, but the **Nautica RIB 20 Cat** is most unusual. While divers (especially those diving the California coast) have long appreciated the practicality of inflatable boats, Nautica has raised the stakes with this design. It combines the load capacity of a rigid inflatable boat, with the stability and sea handling characteristics of a catamaran. However, there is one more twist. A unique "loading ramp" in the bow can be lowered for supreme access to the water. Originally designed to help deploy

people and goods to the beach, it has proven to be an outstanding dive platform as well. When lowered, it lies just a few inches below the waterline, making getting back into the boat after a dive much easier than scrambling over the sides. Rated for a maximum 150 hp, the RIB Cat 20 has a fuel capacity of 48 gallons and will carry up to 2,750 pounds. Other standard equipment includes a console, hydraulic steering, instrument panel, fuel gauge, lift eyes and safety grab handles. Nautica: (305) 556-5554 or www.nauticaintl.com



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In addition, thanks to this co-operative effort between *Skin Diver* and PADI, you can now get up to another \$300 (\$3,000 total retail purchase limit) when you purchase a product or service from any advertiser in this issue of *Skin Diver*. However, the product or service must be purchased from a PADI Dive Center or Resort.

To get your rebate, you simply send in a copy of your Bring a Friend check and a copy of the invoice for your purchase, then PADI will send a rebate check for 10 percent of the amount of your purchase to you.

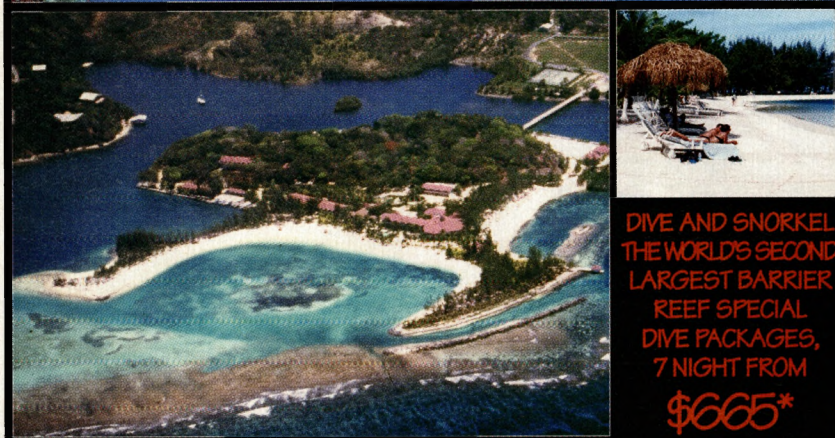
Perhaps you've been thinking about booking a \$2,500 live-aboard dive vacation with an operator that is advertising in this issue. Bring three friends into diving and you can get \$250.00 back on the cost of trip from *Skin Diver*, courtesy of PADI. Of course, you'll need to look sharp on the trip, so you also purchase \$500 of new gear and equipment. Again, by sending in a copy of your receipt and a copy of your PADI Bring a Friend check, you'll get another \$50!

We all want to share our love of the underwater world with our friends and family. Now, with *Skin Diver* and PADI, you can get paid for it, too. So, start recruiting today. For more details on the Bring a Friend campaign, visit www.padi.com and click on the Bring a Friend section on the homepage. 🐠



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The Future of Fish ID: Skin Diver Online's Marine Life Encyclopedia

BY MICHELLE DANNER

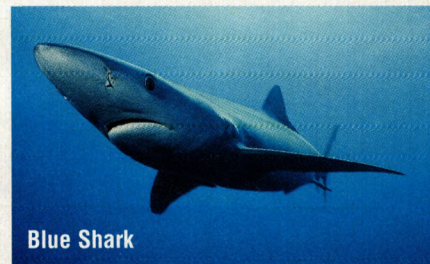
COMING SOON TO COMPUTERS everywhere: Skin Diver Online (SDO) will host an exclusive Marine Life Encyclopedia. In conjunction with Field Editor Marty Snyderman, *Skin Diver* magazine will launch a comprehensive and unique marine life identification area on its website.

The encyclopedia's launch will include Sharks & Rays, with the Caribbean/ Tropical Atlantic and California Coast soon to follow. Each section will be filled with beautiful U/W photographs of invertebrates, fish, hard and soft corals, sponges and more. The encyclopedia is easy to use—just click on your desired subject and the site offers you several links to information.

The first installment, Sharks & Rays, has an abundance of facts and photos. Want to learn more about Bat Rays? Click on the photo and you can find out its scientific name, range, habitat, sightings and natural history.



Manta Ray



Blue Shark

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PHOTOS: MARTY SNYDERMAN

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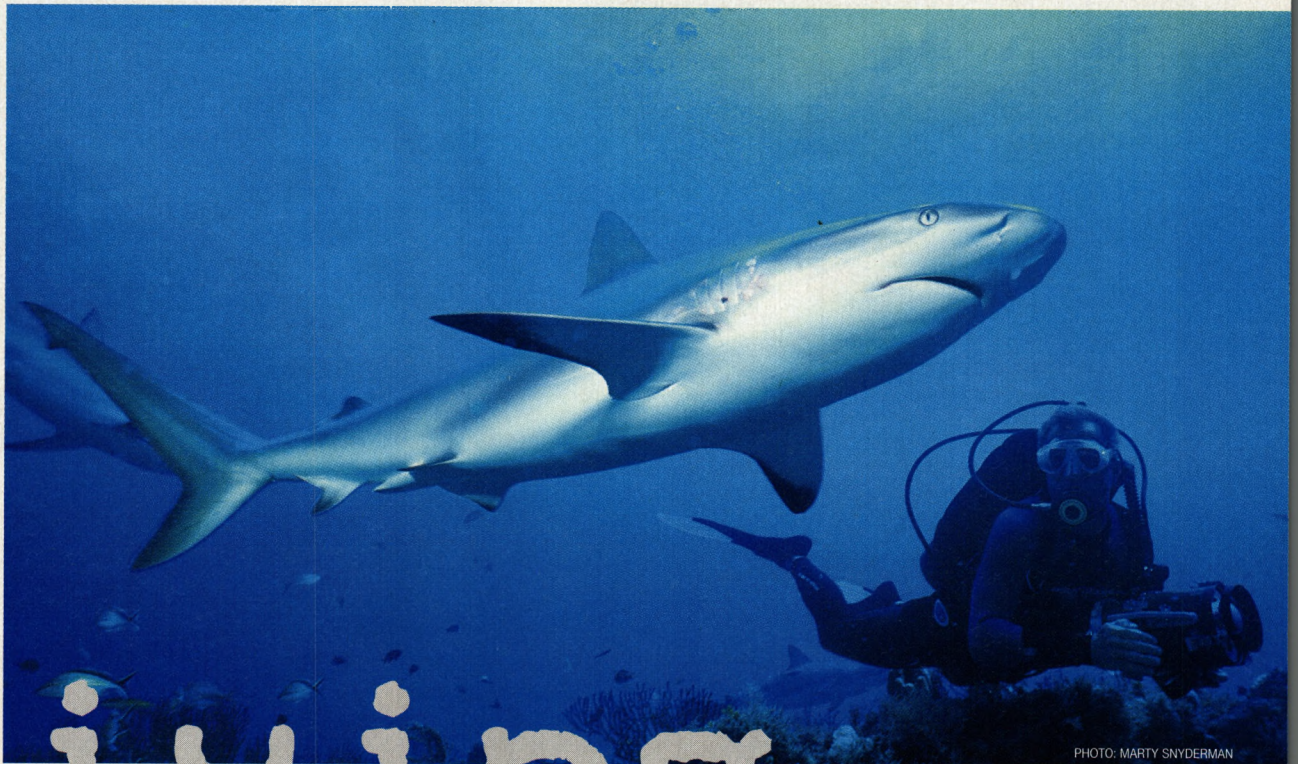


PHOTO: MARTY SNYDERMAN

Diving

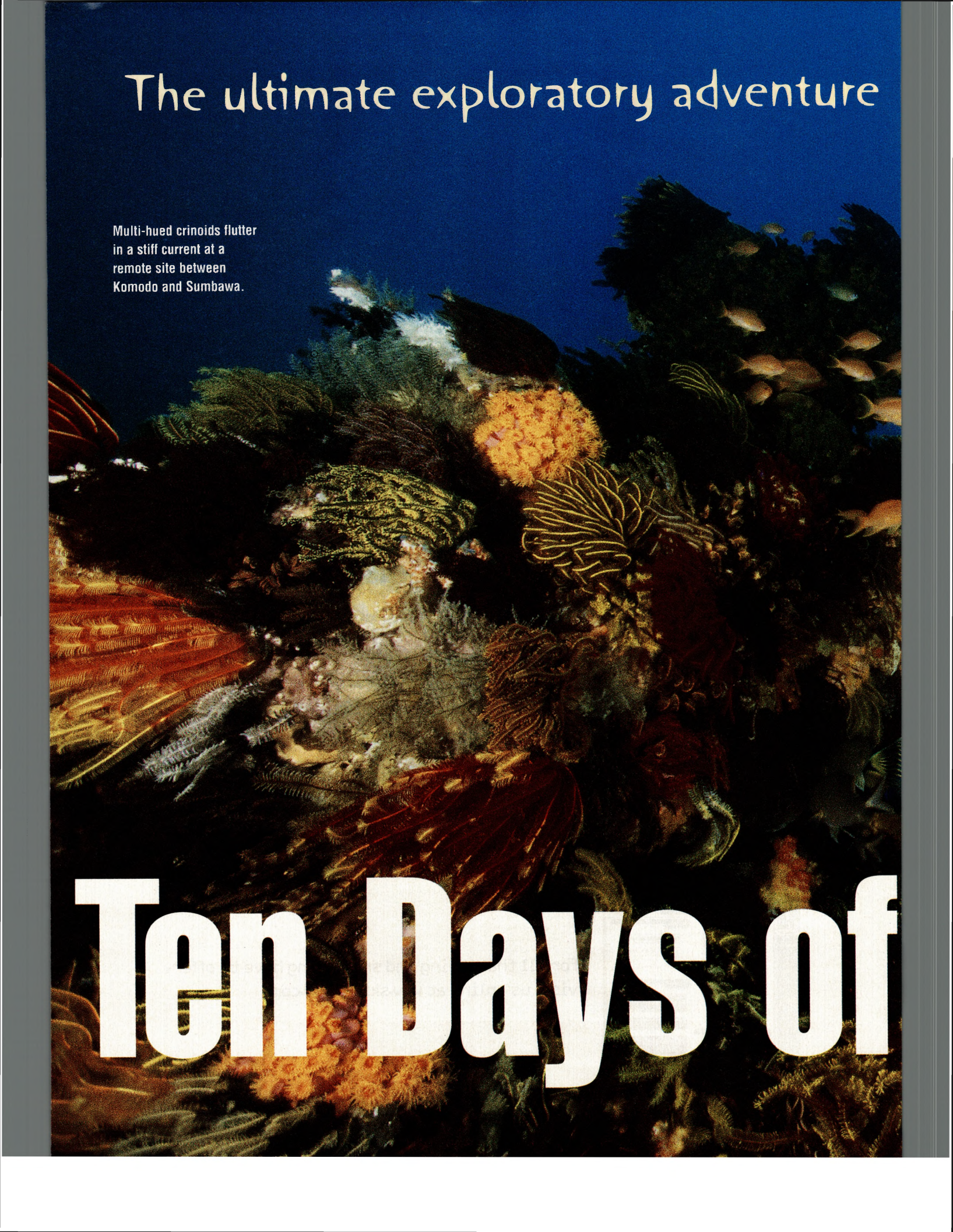
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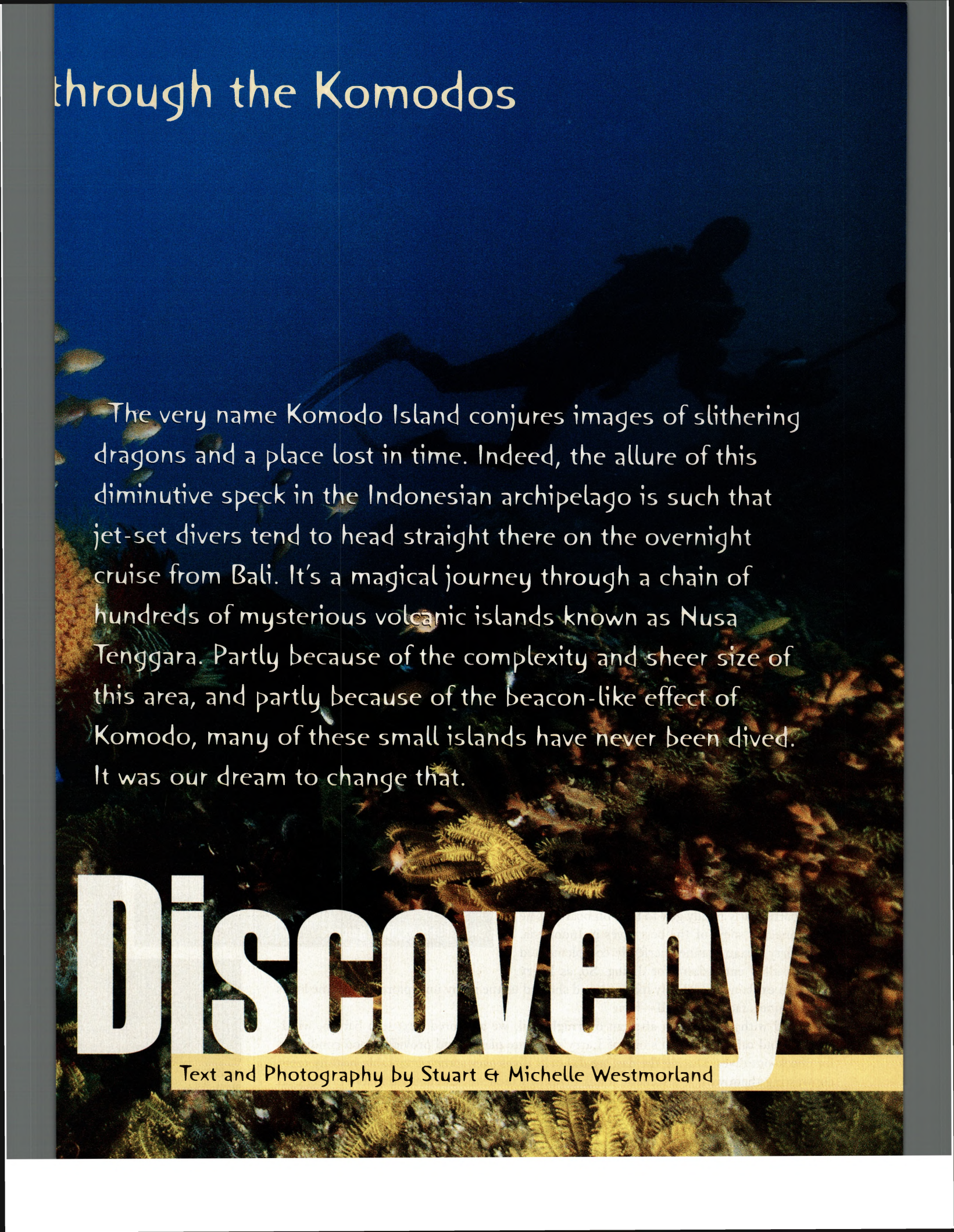


The ultimate exploratory adventure

Multi-hued crinoids flutter
in a stiff current at a
remote site between
Komodo and Sumbawa.

Ten Days of

through the Komodos

The background of the entire page is a composite image. The upper half shows a diver in silhouette swimming horizontally against a deep blue background. The lower half shows a detailed view of a coral reef with various colorful corals and small fish. A large, dark silhouette of a Komodo dragon is superimposed over the upper part of the reef image.

The very name Komodo Island conjures images of slithering dragons and a place lost in time. Indeed, the allure of this diminutive speck in the Indonesian archipelago is such that jet-set divers tend to head straight there on the overnight cruise from Bali. It's a magical journey through a chain of hundreds of mysterious volcanic islands known as Nusa Tenggara. Partly because of the complexity and sheer size of this area, and partly because of the beacon-like effect of Komodo, many of these small islands have never been dived. It was our dream to change that.

Discovery

Text and Photography by Stuart & Michelle Westmorland

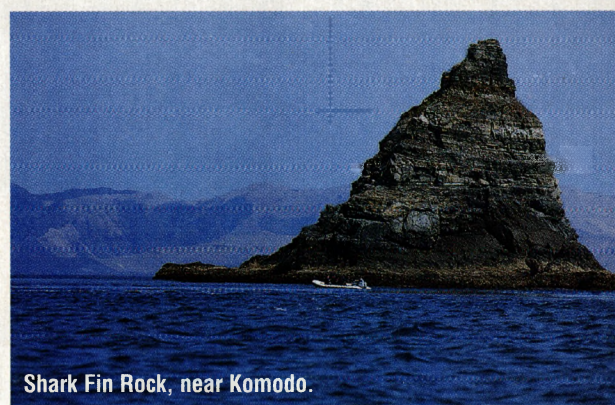
A close-up photograph of a zebra crab, characterized by its black and white striped pattern, nestled within the spines of a fire urchin. The urchin's spines are long, thin, and have a warm, orange-brown hue. The crab is positioned in the center, its body partially obscured by the surrounding spines.

A Zebra Crab finds sanctuary
in the embrace of a Fire
Urchin.

We couldn't afford to charter a boat all to ourselves, so we assembled a group of like-minded divers who would be only too willing to pioneer some new sites on a 10-day live-aboard adventure. Our trip left from the U.S., exactly one month to the day after the September 11 terrorist attacks. At the time, the public consciousness was understandably set against travel, and many of our friends thought we were crazy to go to Indonesia, where there have been clashes between Christians and Muslims on some islands. They may have changed their minds had they seen the boat we boarded.

The *Pelagian* is quite simply one of the most luxurious live-aboards in the world. Our guests' eyes lit up when they were shown around the spacious cabins, sumptuous dining room and chilled-out lounge area. The approach to diving was similarly first-rate; the safety briefing immediately put us at ease. Next, we met Captain Tom and the renowned dive-master Larry Smith to review our itinerary. Larry was a particularly handy guy to have on board, as he has pioneered some of the best dives in Indonesia. His hearty Texan manner perfectly complemented his unbridled enthusiasm for diving. So, as Larry and Tom explained our likely itinerary and showed us the many unexplored areas, the looks on everyone's faces said it all—*bring it on!*

Loaded with anticipation after an overnight sail, we anchored next to a barren, wind-swept island called Banta. It's one of Larry's favorite places, and provides good conditions for check-out dives. During the day, we did drift dives over some remarkably healthy reefs, contrasting them with less frenetic muck dives in which we searched for macro critters. At one particularly rewarding site, we came across enough subjects to make any self-respecting



Shark Fin Rock, near Komodo.

macro nut drool with envy. Half-buried stargazers grimaced at us from the seabed, while Leaf Scorpionfish and Bobtailed Squid provided countless photo opportunities.

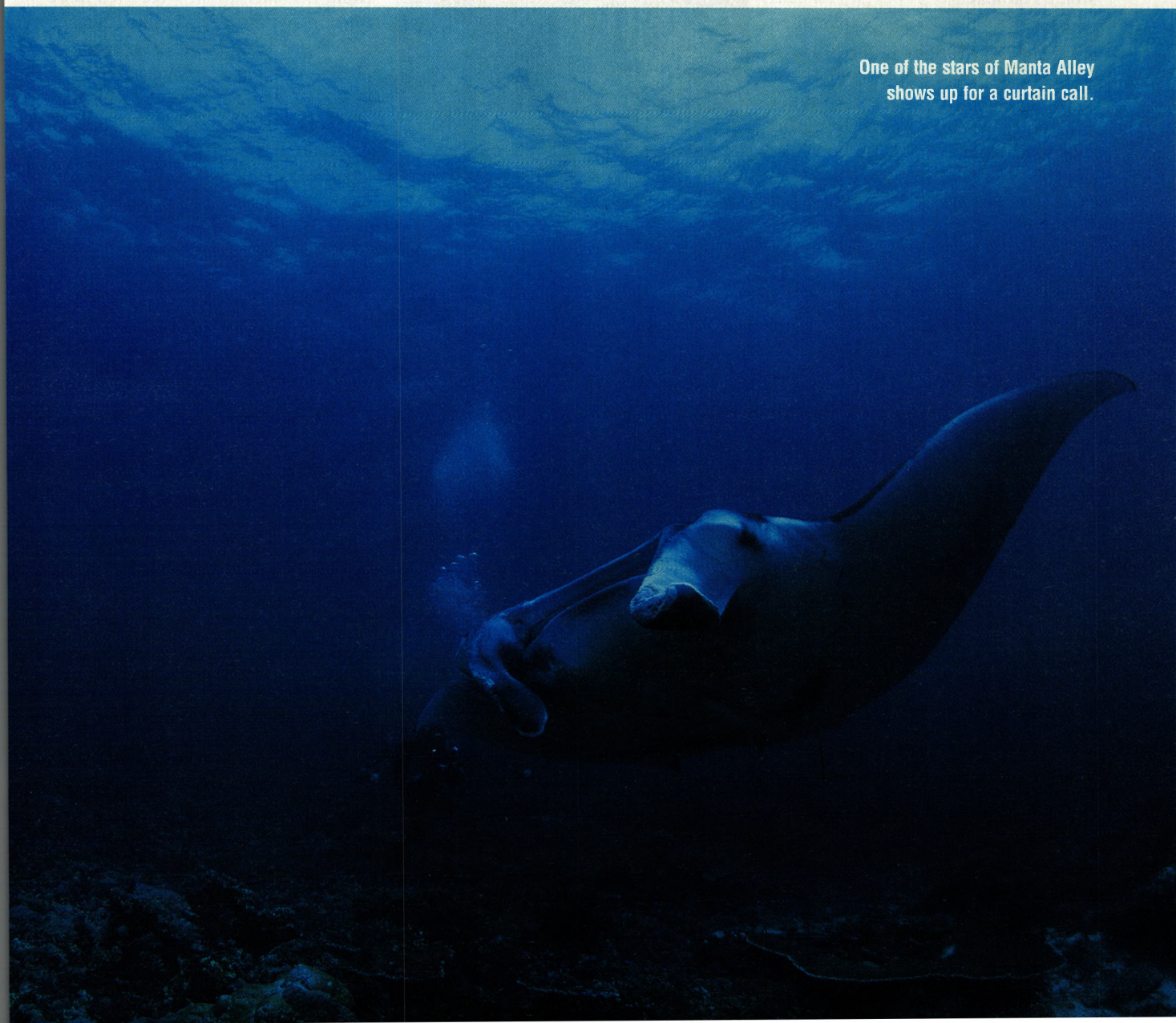
One of the delights of diving an unexplored site is getting the opportunity to grab a bit of immortality by naming it. On this trip, Ken Howard was first up. The site in question was a big rock jutting out of the water in the perfect shape of a shark's fin, so it had to be Shark Fin Rock. Rip-currents swirled around the rock, but we were able to find a protected entry point near its base.

On the dive itself, our movements were limited by the ferocious current, but the small area left to us was well worth checking out. Anthias and other colorful reef fish swarmed around *tubastrea* coral and encrusting sponges. Tucked away in a crevice, just 30 feet below the angry waves, were numerous large surgeonfish, sweetlips, snappers and some monstrous tuna. Punching through the middle of this fish soup were a couple of Whitetipped Reef Sharks, ensuring that this newly-christened site lived up to its name.

We were also intrigued by an island on the charts, listed as Pulau Kelapa (or Coconut Island). We had visions of a green jewel with overhanging palm trees, set in a turquoise sea. The reality was more rugged: A wind-blasted rock which boasted a couple of apologetic-looking trees. As is so often the case, it was a different story underwater. The wall was a seething tapestry of color and life, while out in the blue, a Manta and Eagle Ray billowed by in the afternoon light. Our only problem was the current. Of course, it provided the nutrients that made this such a high-energy site, but two of our group got stuck in downcurrents and suffered nosebleeds as they battled their way back to the surface. With the benefit of hindsight, Mary's Mixmaster provided just a little too much excitement. In addition to the uncompromising currents, the water temperature had plunged to the low 60°F, which seemed pretty strange, given that we were practically on the equator. But then, Indonesia is a place where it pays to expect the unexpected.

Looking for a less challenging prospect for the afternoon

One of the stars of Manta Alley shows up for a curtain call.



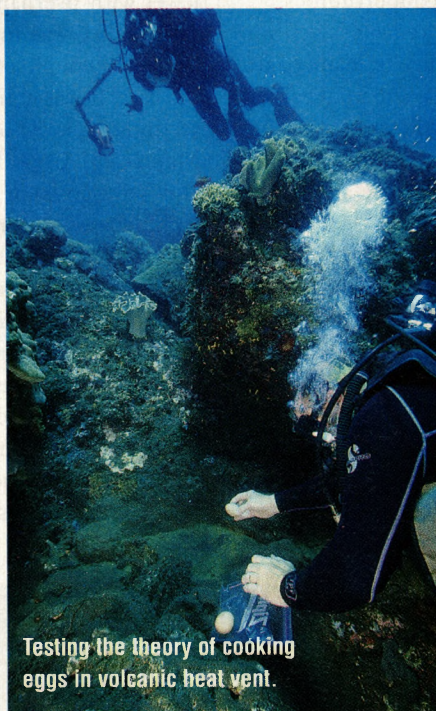
and night dives, we found a placid bay at the south eastern extremity of an island called Sumbawa. The island itself is rather dull, being noted only for its occasional horse-racing and traditional wrestling events. Underwater, our experience was equally uninspiring. The water was still cold and visibility had plummeted. We did, however, come across five different nudibranchs that no one had ever seen before, so the site was named Nudi Galore in the spirit of bygone James Bond actresses ("You expect me to talk?" "No, Mr Bond. We expect you to dive."). However, the bay in question turned out to be less predictable than the average Bond flick. Shortly after dinner, we enjoyed the feeding show put on by a Whale Shark that circled our boat repeatedly. And so, Whale Shark Bay won its moniker.

There are only so many exploratory dives you can subject a group to without causing exploratory burnout, so we planned several days of tried-and-tested, world class dives around Komodo. The southernmost tip of Komodo has a site with mercifully warmer water and some kick-ass Manta action. For several

people in the group, it was their first Manta encounter, and they had the pleasure of marvelling at the angelic, graceful rays as they flew over the reef.

What really makes this place special is the sheer number, and diversity, of marine life species. The seascape is defined by thriving hard corals (so often a rare sight these days), and immense clouds of anthias, which offset the monochrome beauty of the dozen circling Manta Rays. After two jaw-dropping dives, we cruised over to the Komodo Island Park headquarters, where visiting divers are required to check in. It also gave us the opportunity to do one of the weirdest night dives imaginable at a site called Plum Zany. There, we saw fields of day-glo orange and purple sea cucumbers, whose tentacles were spread to gather plankton. Amid this alien tussle were even more colorful animals, sea apples. Shaped like their namesake, they feed on plankton just like sea cucumbers, and look even stranger. It was a scene reminiscent of nothing else on this planet.

Another classic site if you're not on an exploratory is Horseshoe Strait, which offers a blindingly colorful vista. It

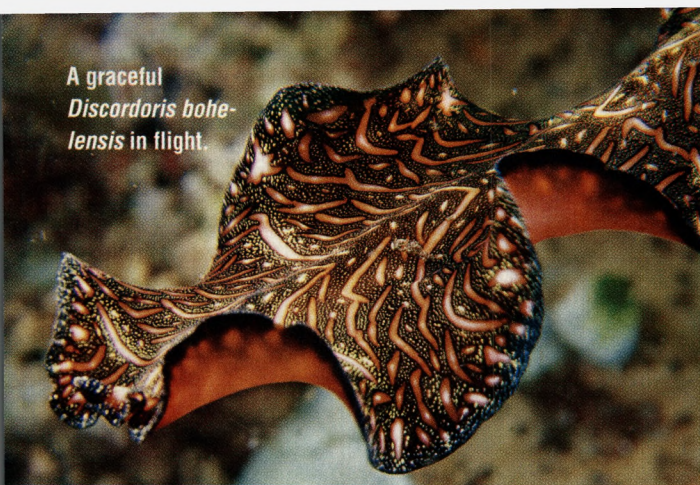


Testing the theory of cooking eggs in volcanic heat vent.



Bubbles issue from the volcanic substrate.

A graceful
Discordoris bohe-
lensis in flight.



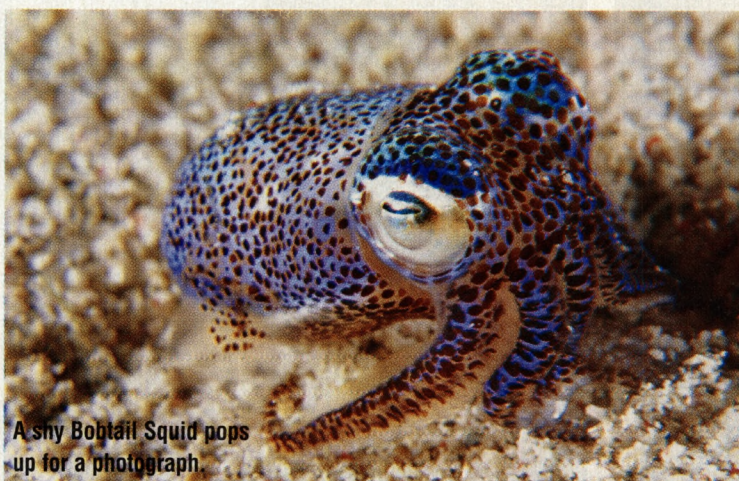
Pelagian at anchor near the
smoldering Sangiang Volcano.



The motion of the sea—
fusiliers zooming over a reef.



A shy Bobtail Squid pops
up for a photograph.



starts with the Yellow Wall of Texas, which is composed of yellow soft corals and is home to some surprisingly large Pygmy Seahorses (they're the size of a half-thumb, as opposed to a fingernail) and a soccer ball-sized frogfish perched regally on a large barrel sponge.

By this stage, we were once again ready to plunge into the unknown. In a promising spot off southwest Flores, we cruised around and eventually found a great dive site, boasting colorful crinoids, soft corals and voluminous gorgonian fans from just below the surface to 100 feet and deeper. Several in our group were even lucky enough to see a rarely-encountered Bamboo Shark, so we took the opportunity to name the site Gary's Bamboo Shark Point.

Thereafter, the two dive tenders set off in different directions and the diving took on a distinctively competitive edge. The videographer on Team Two trounced the photographers' efforts on Team One by bringing back evidence of a

Man-eating Dragons!

You can't go all the way to Komodo and pass up the opportunity to see the dragons, so we made the journey into the island's sun-blasted interior on a day trip. These lumbering, prehistoric throwbacks (actually oversized monitor lizards) grow to more than 10 feet, and kill large mammals with the help of the lethal cocktail of viruses that live in their deeply unpleasant saliva. Once bitten, a victim gradually loses strength and dies over the course of a few days, while the patient predators await their feast. They have killed humans in the past, but it's reasonably safe to view the dragons at close quarters with the assistance of the park's guides.

classy wall dive that proffered Hammerhead Nudibranchs, Scarlet Lady Shrimp, a Green Sea Turtle, a Blue Spotted Stingray and more sea apples. It was christened Budley's Playpen. The following dives gave us sea snakes, more stingrays and toxic sea urchins that played host to some enchanting little crabs. It was ludicrously easy to find reef octopi hunting out in the open, displaying their range of defense mechanisms (ink, camouflage, blocking their lairs with rocks and shells) when prompted by inquisitive divers.

For our final dive, we chose an intriguing beach that sloped gently into the sea. Situated at the entrance to a small bay, it had all the makings of a great muck dive. It was a difficult environment, which threw up clouds of milky water whenever the silty substrate was disturbed. But for those prepared to contend with awkward conditions, there are often rewards. We saw some amazing blenny faces peering from colorful sponges, but the highlight of the dive was finding several brilliant turquoise Bobtail Squid. And so, we concluded our explorations by discovering and diving the region's latest macro site, Silt City.

In spite of the bad press and ominous warnings from the State Department about travel in Indonesia, we enjoyed a unique diving experience and met many people who made us feel truly welcome as Americans in a Muslim nation. Having the chance to explore the wild seas of Nusa Tenggara (seeing sites no other diver has seen), as well as leaving a personal legacy by naming the sites we visited, made this trip a diver's exploratory dream come true. 🐙



Sharks on Prozac, Coral on Steroids

Phoenix

All human endeavors are motivated by just a few primitive urges: eat, sleep, reproduce... and explore!

Five divers, five scientists, a doctor and a filmmaker tap into those gut feelings and set sail in search of the Primal Ocean.

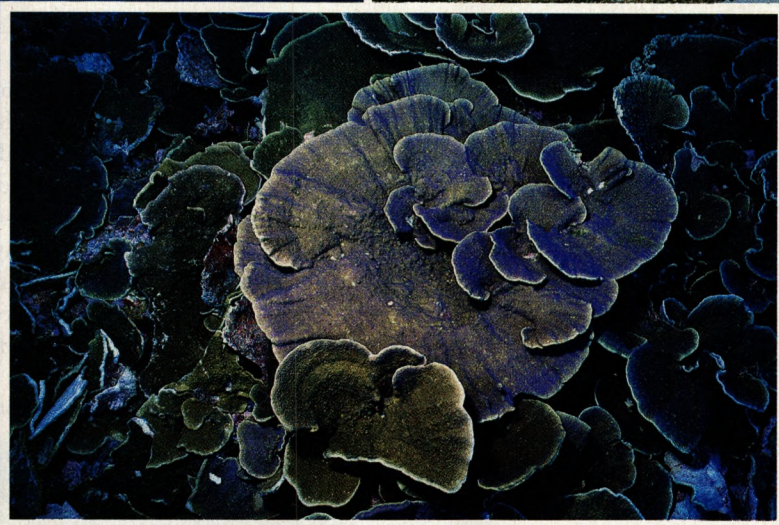
"Ugh, we should have sold this as a crash-diet cruise."

"Just take a pill and stop groaning," said Rob, he-of-the-iron-stomach.

For the seasick, fine sailors are as painful to endure as reformed smokers and as self-righteous as early-risers. As Rob bounded gleefully to the dawn-kissed deck for his rostered

whale watch, I wondered about the other suffering fools on board *NAT'A*. Wedged into bed with extra pillows, curled against the glare of an unread copy of *Moby Dick* or *The Perfect Storm*, squinting through the port-holed sunbeams at their clocks—only 22 days of this misery to go. I knew exactly what they were thinking, because I was thinking the same

Life: dense, pristine and in swirling profusion, awaited discovery around every corner during the *NAI'A'S* 23 days' voyage of discovery through the South Pacific's extremely isolated Phoenix Islands.



Rising

thing: "It's all Cat's fault, she made me do this."

It's true, I'm afraid. You see, my boyfriend—that's Rob—has this big sailing boat, sorry, ship, *NAI'A*. And while he and his family partners diligently attempt to pay relentless bills by hosting scuba diving expeditions in our delightful home country of Fiji, I feel compelled to lure them off the busi-

Text and Photography by Cat Holloway

ness course for cool new places. It's not like they are too hard to convince, though. It's that *urge* to explore. It rumbles and roars: "Let's do it. It sounds so wild!"

Well, it is wild. It's the same impulse that makes us strap a bomb to our back, breathe through a rubber hose and pretend that we (and our outrageously expensive cameras) are great mates with deadly sea snakes. It makes us reach out of a cage waving and smiling preposterously at a massive shark passing inches away en route to festering bovine bait. It makes us dive deeper than we planned. Stay longer than we ought.

Look, I'm not justifying it. I'm not saying it's right. But, c'mon, we've all done it. Risk. Possibility. It's intuitive, not intellectual. We take risks because of the remote possibility of synergy with the awesome, the beautiful and the mysterious.

Some risks are calculated—to the tune of many thousands of dollars, in fact. Which is what we'd asked these retching divers to pay for the privilege of joining this expedition and sponsoring a bunch of geeky Latin-speaking biologists. Our concept was humble:

Team up eco-divers with adventurous scientists.

Explore a place that no one has ever been before.

Gather fascinating facts and heady experiences to enlighten and inspire.

Save the world.

"...more than an ocean, the Pacific is like a universe, and a chart of it looks like a portrait of the night sky...an immensity of emptiness, dotted with misshapen islands that twinkle like stars."—Paul Theroux

The sole desire linking everyone aboard *NAI'A* during that costly, stormy, five-day crossing was: Just get us there; Phoenix Islands or bust.

It all started when Kandy Kendall, an adventurous friend and video producer, admitted that she yearned for some remote diving, but every location seemed explored already.

"Jacques Cousteau, Stan Waterman, Hans Hass—they pioneered all the great destinations. What is left for our generation to claim? Where can we go?"

Rob and I turned to each other and smiled. He whipped out the Central Pacific Ocean chart, circling a small cluster of dots in the middle of nowhere called the Phoenix Group. One of the eight islands, Nikumaroro, was an atoll we had visited with *NAI'A* twice previously as part of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR) quest for the remains of the world's most famously disappeared aviator, Amelia Earhart. TIGHAR believes Earhart successfully

landed on Nikumaroro and perished there. An early TIGHAR expedition to Nikumaroro had included some underwater searches and, despite a sport diving prohibition on later TIGHAR journeys there, Rob and I had sneaked a couple of sensational hours underwater while setting moorings. We did not find Amelia, but we vowed one day to return

The really stimulating and hectic years on Aba-Riringa are those during which more than two sailing boats pull into the lagoon to rest.

to explore the other islands for great diving. Kandy was now vowing to join us and sponsor an expedition.

We searched and discovered that other than those few TIGHAR divers in 1989, no one had dived Nikumaroro and the only other diving in the Phoenix group had been done at Aba-Riringa in the early '70s by some Waikiki Aquarium biologists. In Phoenix, we had ourselves one of Herman Melville's "milky-ways of coral isles, low-lying, endless, unknown Archipelagoes" almost entirely uninhabited and with the promise of untold underwater treasures.

The Phoenix Islands lie more than 1,000 nautical miles northeast of Fiji and within the long stretch of equatorial Pacific Ocean territory claimed by the Republic of Kiribati

SHIP'S LOG

Dr. Gregory Stone—Scientific Director

We deployed the *National Geographic*-sponsored deep-sea camera seven times, on each occasion to 3,000 feet. During three deployments, the bait pole used to attract animals was violently torn off the rig by Six-gill Sharks! Six-gill Sharks live only in deep water and this is the first confirmed record of these sharks in the region. We also filmed the massive deep sea Pacific Sleeper Shark.



A mysterious anchor left by some forlorn, lost sailors.

(pronounced "kitty-bus"). Although Kiribati earns significant income from selling international fishing licenses and such a remote location could hardly be considered safe from illegal fishing, one thing gave Phoenix enormous possibility: a lack of human settlement. Tropical atolls look idyllic from a distance and romantic in our collective consciousness. But in fact, they are harsh hostile places, bleak and forbidding beyond the fringing palm trees, without life-sustaining fresh water and ceaselessly exposed to the wrathful intensity of the open ocean. Guano miners and copra harvesters left their mark on the islands briefly in the early 1800s. Settlers from the overcrowded Gilbert and Ellice Islands attempted a new life on three of the Phoenix Islands in 1938, but the British colonial scheme was all but abandoned early in the '40s. The final few desperate and determined villagers were evacuated in 1963. Only Aba-Riringa has any inhabitants now—less than 40 people from eight families assigned to the desolate strip of scrub-covered coral in a care-taking role for the Kiribati government. The really stimulating and hectic years on Aba-Riringa are those during which more than two sailing boats pull into the lagoon to rest.

Nowadays, there is terrifying evidence everywhere that coral reefs (as we know them, at least) are dying. Marine life is disappearing faster than we can even identify, let alone understand it. For us, Kandy and the other sponsors who signed on for this expedition, just going diving wasn't enough. We all wanted to learn as much as we could and make the journey as meaningful as possible to the rest of the world. We called the expedition Phoenix Rising, reflecting on the eternal cycle of death and rebirth symbolized by the mythical Egyptian bird, the Phoenix, who rises again from its own ashes just as coral builds and blooms on the skeletons of old reefs—for all eternity, we hope.

We dreamed that in Phoenix we would find a pristine place free from the disease, pollution and abuse cloaking our seas in doom. And we shared a grander ideal: We might actually find a wilderness worth saving. We needed grass-roots science to ascertain Phoenix's importance, then strategy to encourage preservation. For this, we turned to another friend, Dr Gregory Stone, the Director of Conservation at the New England Aquarium. Greg and his wife, Austen Yoshinaga, are ardent field biologists and were immediately inspired to make the Phoenix Rising Expedition the first in the New England Aquarium's Primal Ocean Project: A quest to identify, document and protect the planet's final unblemished underwater frontiers.

According to Greg, "There are just a few isolated places left on this planet where we have any hope of seeing ocean

environments in pre-historic rawness, free of the destruction of development and over-fishing."

*There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar*
—Byron

That old seafaring cliché about getting your sea legs in three days turned out to be entirely accurate. Voyagers emerged miraculously from their cabins in cheerful anticipation of an arrival, to gaze at the horizon on whale watch, ready dive gear and cameras and gather for research briefings. Debate even became heated. It wasn't just that the expedition ichthyologist, New England Aquarium Curator of Fishes and Reptile, Dr. Steven Bailey, wanted to collect fish specimens. He was also keen to do it down deep, forcing a long decompression and luring an unpredictable audience of sharks. I volunteered to help, but the expedition's physician, a diving and emergency medicine specialist, Dr. Craig Cook, reminded us to temper zeal with sagacity.

"We are three days from even the most basic medical facility; five days from Fiji's decompression chamber.

Whatever happens, we have to fix it on board. Is this really worth the risk?"

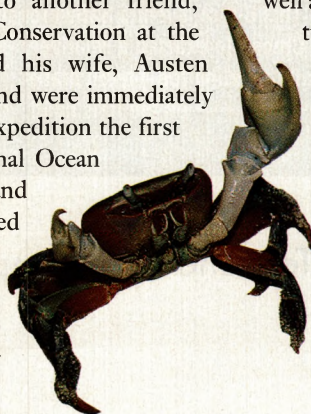
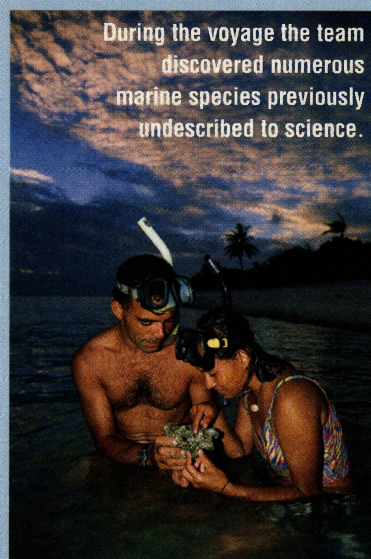
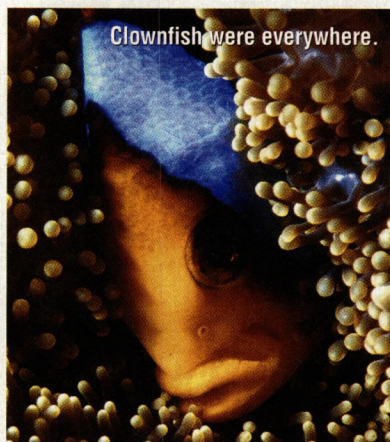
"Like going to the moon and not bringing back moon rocks!" countered Steve.

So, Craig assisted us in the dive planning and equipment preparation. Rob hovered over, videoing us and counting the dozens of sharks patrolling behind our catch bags, and NATA divemasters stood by with extra nitrox tanks for

shallow-water changeovers. We passed our decompression time examining and collecting in the shallow reef gullies. Hours later, we returned with several fish species not previously identified in the region and a couple of species that possibly had never been described at all.

In fact, the scientists recorded many such exciting finds. As well as identifying some previously unrecognized sea bird and turtle nesting sites, Austen collected 69 species of algae, including one that had only been reported in the South Pacific once before. The team's coral biologist and rapid site assessment expert, Dr David Obura, from East Africa's CORDIO program, completed the group's first-ever coral abundance and diversity surveys and found unparalleled coral health. Photographer Mary Jane Adams captured the world's first image of a rare blenny, *Cirripectis jenningsi*, alive in

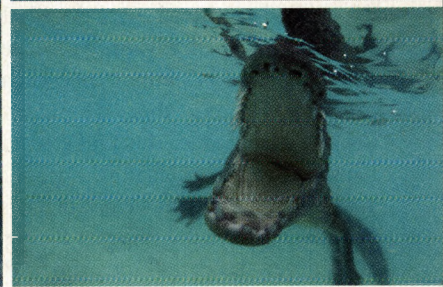
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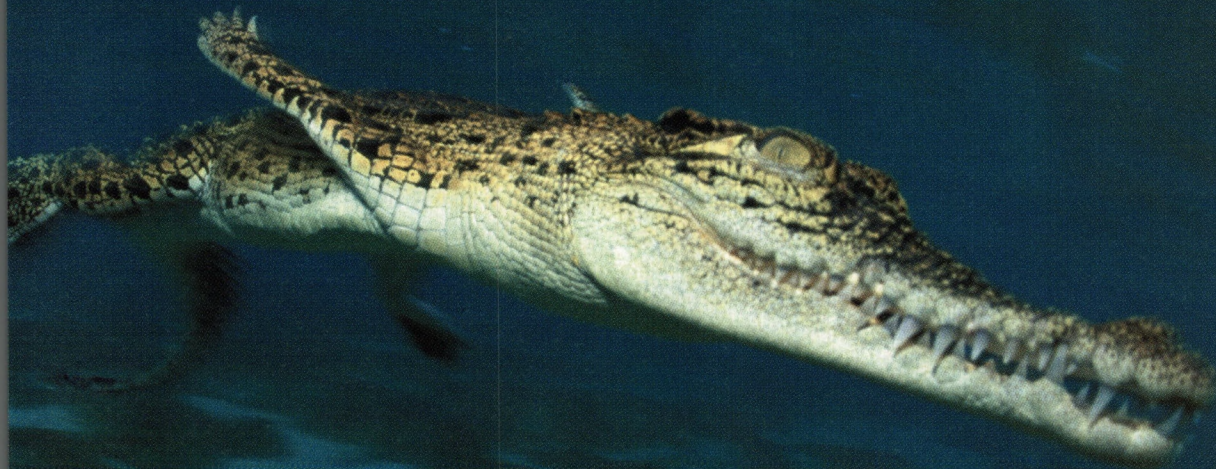


This 6-foot juvenile Saltwater Crocodile exacted a relatively small modeling fee—teeth marks on the lens hood.



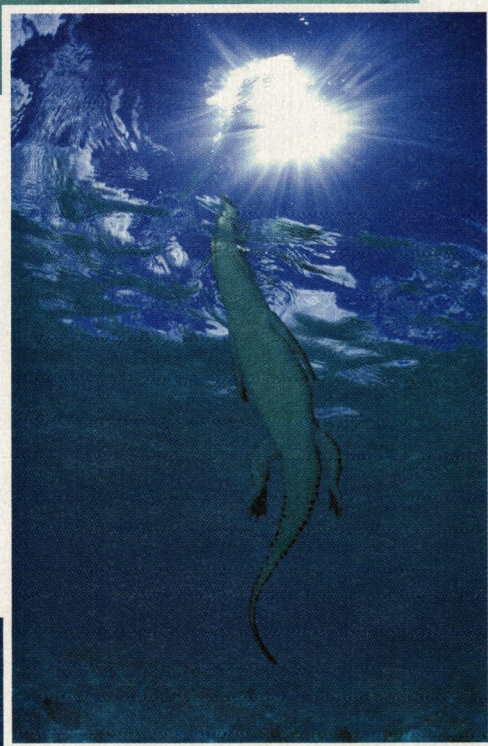
Text and Photography by Scott Tuason

Snap Away

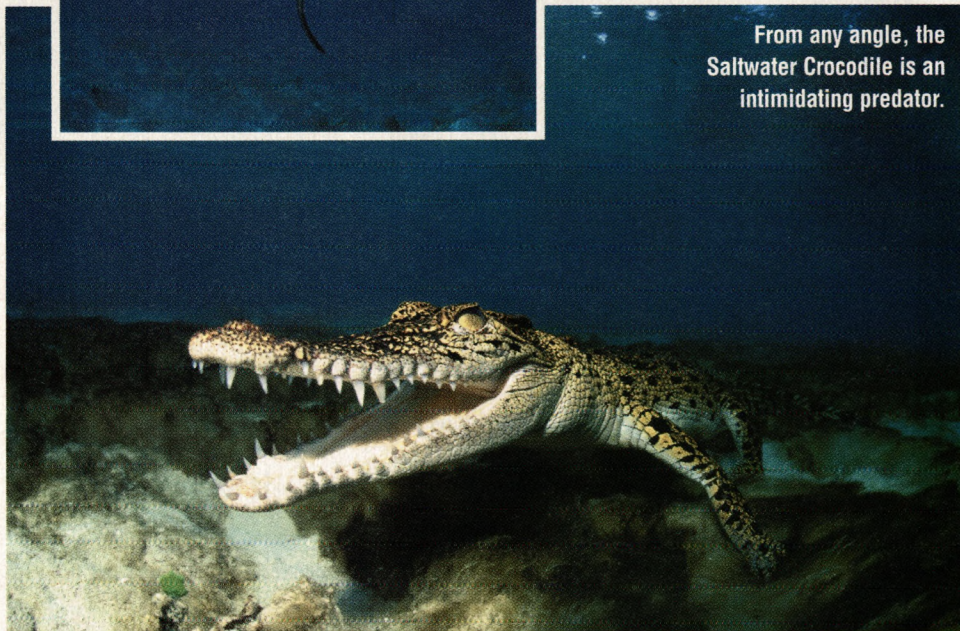


Photographing the Fearsome Saltwater Croc

When I was first asked if I would be interested in doing a coffee table book on pearl farms, to be honest, my first thought was “how booooring.” Little did I know that the decision to do the book would lead to one of my most bone-chilling underwater encounters. It wasn’t that I swam with box jellyfish or even hundreds of sea snakes that strained my nerves to their limit—it was going lens-to-teeth with “*Crocodylus porosus*.”



From any angle, the Saltwater Crocodile is an intimidating predator.



To give a bit of background on pearl farms, they are situated in some of the most remote and pristine aquatic environments in the Philippines. Pearl divers I talked to told stories of encountering Dugongs, hammerhead sharks, Manta Rays and Whale Sharks—animals rarely seen today in the waters around the Philippines. But due to the protective efforts of pearl farmers, their farms have become a magnet for marine life.

Getting to these farms isn't easy and they are not open to the public. I went to a remote farm in the southern Philippines to shoot general pearl farming activities. Some of the workers mentioned the unique marine animals found there. They mentioned Horseshoe Crabs, which I had never seen before in the Philippines waters, and some rare Nudibranchs. I then asked about some of the bigger stuff found around the farm, and they said that sometimes at night they see "Buwaya," which is "crocodile" in the local dialect. I asked how big and they said anywhere from 3 to more than 15 feet.

The rational part of my brain said, "No way am I going to snorkel around in brackish, murky water at night to photograph crocodiles. Chances are they will see me long before I see them, and that could make it my

last snorkeling trip, ever!"

Nevertheless, my photographic ambitions silenced all thoughts of self preservation. I was scheduled to be at the farm for seven days, and decided that everyday after a day of shooting, I would try cruising the mangrove areas in a dingy. I took three cameras with me—a Nikonos RS with a 13 mm lens and strobe; a Nikon F4 in a housing with a 16 mm fisheye; and a Nikon F90 in a housing with a 20 mm lens and over/under attachment. I wanted all the bases covered in case I got that one chance in a lifetime to swim with a Saltwater Crocodile.

Not much is known about swimming, diving or snorkeling with salties, as many of the people who have, unfortunately aren't around to give advice. After some research on the Internet all I could gather was that when a saltie is sighted in the water, one is supposed to get out, *immediately!* Well, I did not have the luxury of having a remote camera to shoot with from the safety of the boat. I didn't even have someone willing to get in the water with me; I figured if I had someone else in the water, at least my chances of being attacked would drop by 50 percent. So, armed only with my camera and an inept knowledge of salties, I set off to find the elusive predator.

I don't know if it was luck or there are simply a lot of crocodiles in that part of the Philippines, but on the third day, I ran into a 6-foot juvenile (thank God, it wasn't a mature 15-foot adult). As I slipped into the shallow water with my snorkel and camera, much to my amazement, the crocodile's first instinct was flight. It took off for deeper water in a quick burst of speed, and I almost lost sight of it. I chased after it, which is something I always try to avoid doing when photographing marine life, but a chance like this called for a change in tactics. I soon caught up as it lay on the bottom, looking like it had spent most of its energy and was ready to pose for the camera.

Up until this point, except for the initial adrenaline rush, I was feeling surprisingly comfortable being in the water with the croc.

But then, the croc suddenly lunged and snapped its jaws at me, just inches from my camera lens. This is when my brain screamed, "What the hell am I doing chasing a Saltwater Crocodile with razor sharp teeth, hundreds of miles away from the nearest hospital?!" Just one bite would require a massive amount of stitches, at best. And, that's assuming I could even get the animal to pry its jaws off my arm.

I backed off to put some distance between the croc and I. At times it would go straight for me with its mouth closed, and I would dodge it like an incoming missile. (I now know how fast I can snorkel backwards, and I am sure it will again come in handy one day.) Other

SALTWATER CROCODILE FACTS

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Crocodylus porosus*

DISTRIBUTION: Southeast Asia and Northern Australia

HABITAT: Brackish water around coastal areas and rivers, but sometimes seen in the open ocean.

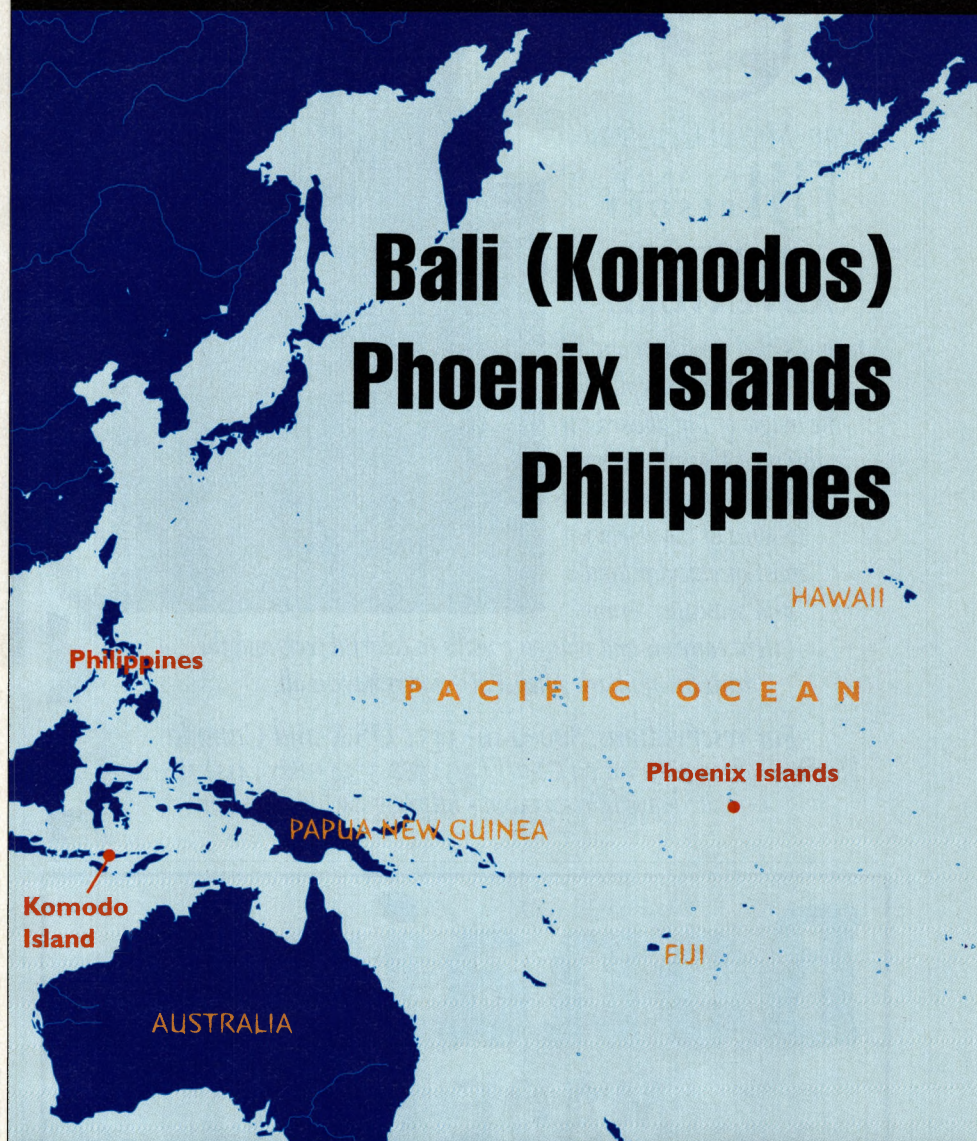
SIZE: Maximum of 21 feet in length.

REPRODUCTION: Females lay about 40 to 60 eggs. If eggs are incubated at 88.9°F, juveniles will hatch male; hotter or colder they will become females.

Saltwater Crocodiles are considered endangered in the Philippines and other parts of Southeast Asia.

times, the croc would sink to the bottom and play dead, until I got my lens inches from its nose. Again, it would take off for the surface where it would stay for a few minutes before continuing on.

I was able to finish all three rolls of film without incident, except for a few teeth marks on the lens hood. I was fully satisfied that I had gotten more shots than I had ever imagined I would. Before the encounter, I told myself that I would be happy with one shot; to come out of it with three rolls was an incredible bonus. And since then I haven't bothered going back. Having spent a good part of an hour with the croc was enough to last me a few years...if not a lifetime. 🐊



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GETTING THERE

Air New Zealand, Air Pacific or Continental Vacations into Fiji, then three days boat ride north.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

April through November.

TOPSIDE CLIMATE

Hot, tropical, equatorial humidity, open ocean winds.

WATER TEMPERATURE

85 to 88°F

EXCHANGE RATE

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TIME DIFFERENCE

Eastern Standard Time +16 hours.

LIVE-ABOARD

No dive operators on location. The only dive operation to have visited is NAI/A. NAI/A has scheduled a return voyage to the islands in June/July 2002. NAI/A (800) 903-0272 www.naia.com.fj

KOMODO ISLANDS

GETTING THERE

Singapore Airlines to Singapore, with a flight to Bali.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

Dry season is May to October.

TOPSIDE CLIMATE

Near the equator—tropical, hot and humid, 85°F.

WATER TEMPERATURE

Can range from 75°F in the South (Komodo), to 82°F in the North.

TIME DIFFERENCE

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LIVE-ABOARDS

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SHIP'S LOG

Sangeeta Mangubhai—
Conservation Management,
World Wide Fund for Nature

Each moment is busy—underwater we collect samples, record data, count species and shoot video and pictures. Between dives we swap discoveries, enter information from our slates into the databases and pour over books attempting to identify our finds. We're only scratching the surface.

Inside the lagoon we found a field of thousands of colorful giant clams. As we snorkeled into the shallows, sharks started darting towards us—mainly Blacktips, three or four at a time. But, as we lifted our heads and looked inshore, we saw the most astonishing gathering of a hundred or more small reef sharks swarming in just a couple of feet of water. Seven turtles and two Mantas later we finally hung up our fins for the day.

the wild. The National Geographic Society's deep-sea baited camera rig, on loan to us from Emory Kristof, filmed the region's first Six-gill and Pacific Sleeper Sharks living at 3,000 feet. Our single deep tow-net collection to 3,300 feet revealed strange new creatures. We even found sunken ship wreckage, including what appeared to be harpoons from whaling vessels in the early 1800s. During the 13 diving days in Phoenix, we completed 50 research dives for biological surveys among seven islands—Nikumaroro, McKean, Sydney, Aba-Riringa, Enderbury, Hull and Phoenix. It was often the most demanding diving we had ever done, and by far the most exhilarating.

"There is absolutely no way we could have fulfilled these scientific ambitions without the help of the divers," said Greg. "Not just for their generous funding, diving skill and extra effort underwater, but for the amazing amount of marine life knowledge and intelligent observation they brought to the party. This was a tremendously successful collaboration, educational for the scientists, too."

Each diver had a specific job and with it a deep sense of purpose. Representing one of the expedition's sponsors, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), marine biologist Sangeeta Mangubhai braved the

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pounding surf to get ashore on several islands and hike the perimeters, counting turtle nests. While Mary Jane Adams kept a meticulous list of small reef fish and built an equally impressive library of matching photos, Bruce Thayer used his video skills to complete the invaluable documentation of reef transects at every site. Craig Cook tried valiantly to estimate numbers in the massive hordes of herbivores grazing the reefs. Sometimes the schools were so tight and thick, moving so quickly and frantically they looked more like carpets unfurling and flying over the slopes and between the bommies. Rob captured all this underwater action on digital video and drew the dive site maps. Australian cameraman and sound technician Alex Morrison pitched and tossed about topside, filming shipboard and shore activities and interviewing the characters. Everyone believed they had the best job. But, in truth, I did. My role was to swim as far as I could to count and identify the big blue-water

SHIP'S LOG

Cat Holloway—Predator & Pelagic Surveys

Our calendars are marked more by diving discoveries than days, miles rather than minutes. Today at Aba-Riranga proved beyond any doubt how incredibly lucky we are to be doing this. By 8:00 AM we had rolled into the mouth of a channel and were immediately engulfed near the surface by hundreds of unusual parrotfish rushing at us in storm of synchronized spawning. We descended through this mass onto thousands more parrotfish literally carpeting the channel floor, swirling and rising in waves of sexual frenzy. They had timed the mass conception immaculately. As the outgoing tidal current strengthened, the eggs and spawn would be mixed and carried out to sea—hopefully away from predators.

Surrounding this scene were hundreds of hungry tangs and easily a thousand Bigeye Jacks. Enormous Napoleon Wrasse cruised overhead, followed by two feasting Manta Rays. An Eagle Ray negotiated the traffic and a giant Marble Ray sat on the edge of the drop-off. A green turtle hovered in the blue, while surgeonfish cleaned the algae from its shell. We turned the outside corner to find a spiraling school of Chevron Barracuda, more hundreds of trevally and 50-odd huge Bumphead Parrotfish thundering along the reef. All this before breakfast? You bet.



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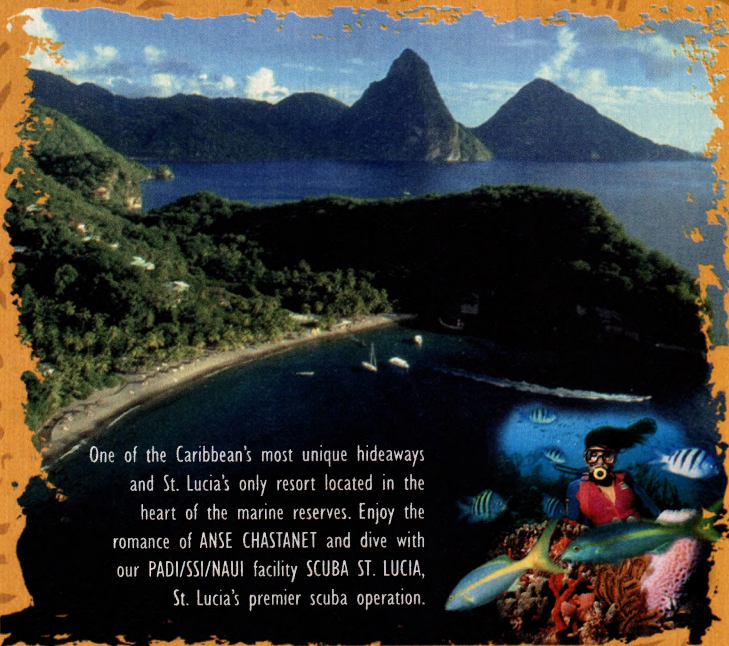


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SHIP'S LOG

Dr David Obura—Rapid Site Assessment & Coral Biology

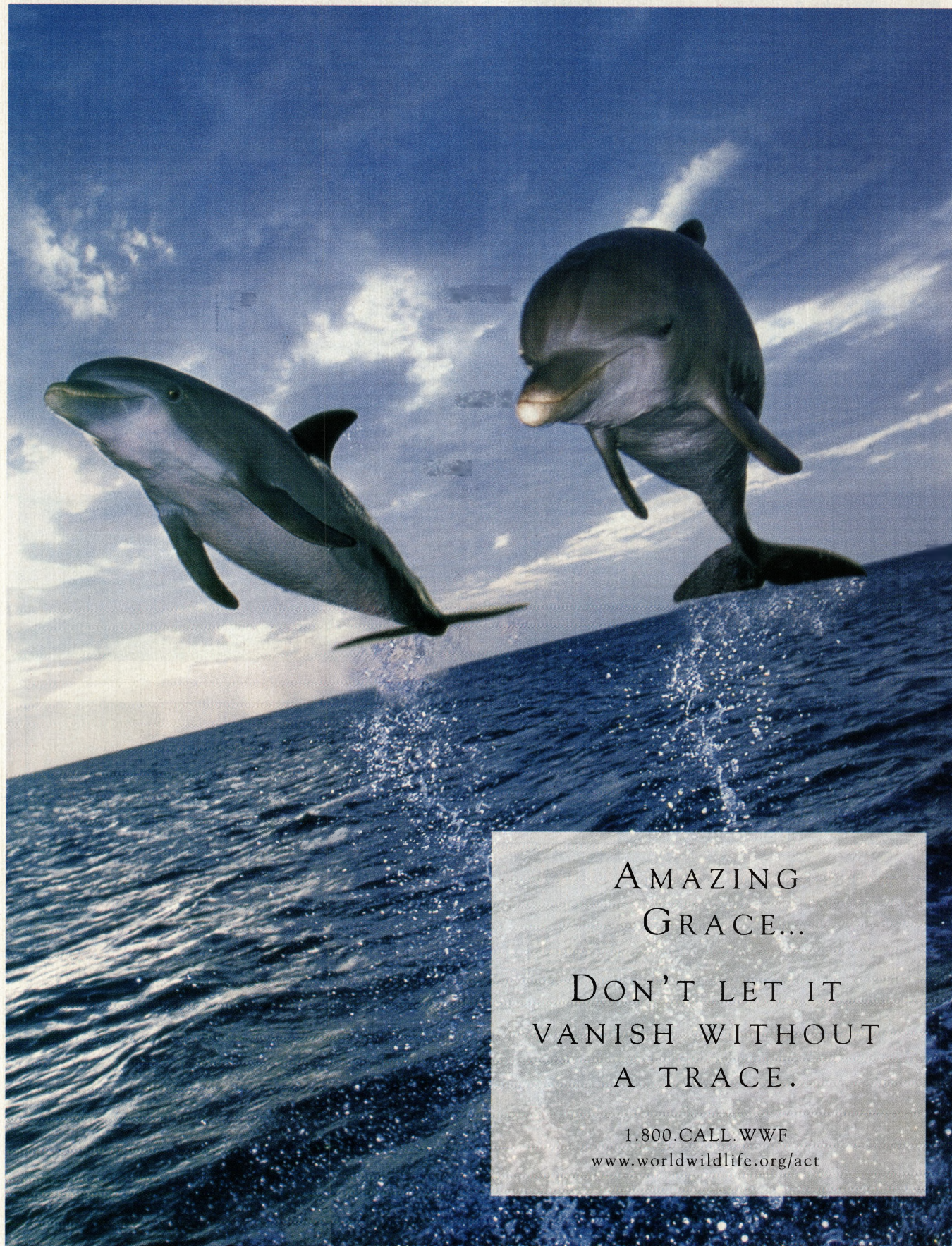
I never imagined a coral landscape like Aba-Riranga's lagoon could exist. Coral hills and valleys built from table and staghorn corals. Riding the tidal current is like flying a jet through craggy mountain passes, dodging bombardment by titan triggerfish and coral-eating butterflyfish.

predatory fish such as snapper, tuna, trevally, rays and sharks.

So what of all that risk? Sound like too much fun to be dangerous? Hardly a breathtaking rush of fear akin to sky-diving! But, as 23 days of delicious continuous-release stimulant, it was just as intense. Sure, there were plenty of those, "Oh no, what have I done?" moments. Mighty currents ripped us to windward. Threatening sharks warned us out of the water. A cornered surgeonfish delivered a nasty thigh laceration. Small concerns were exaggerated enormously by the sheer distance we traveled away from civilization and from, well, anything at all.

But better, this experience was a gift of enduring thrills—Memory flashes a year later as we recount our favorite wild encounters or review our images; a stirring sense of achievement with tangible rewards of public and private knowledge. This is the rare kind of thrill you can share with others, be they scientists, sport divers, old friends or new neighbors. Because, everyone—old or young, rich or poor, divers or mountain climbers—knows the urge to explore.

David Obura presented preliminary results of the Phoenix Rising Expedition at the 2000 Coral Reef Symposium in Bali. Greg Stone and Austen Yoshinaga (NEAq), David Obura (CORDIO), Sangeeta Mangubhai (WWF) and Rob Barrel and Cat Holloway (NAPA) presented a full report of the biological surveys and a conservation management plan to the government of the Republic of Kiribati in April 2001. Several topic-specific scientific papers are awaiting publication. And a video/TV program about the voyage is in production. NAPA is currently planning a return journey sometime this year. 🐟



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Clubbin' It In CAYMAN

The concept was simple, if not a little bit strange. I'd follow a dive club for a week and reveal all their secrets in the pages of this magazine. I'd get to know the people, learn their idiosyncrasies and, hopefully, some Jerry Springer-like dirt, then tell the diving world all about it.

BY FRED D. GARTH

Our rendezvous point was Little Cayman, so I warmed up to the article idea quickly. In addition to eye-popping wall diving, it's a laid-back little island with less than 200 residents, one cop, one bank that opens one day a week (now that's banker's hours), a dozen rental cars and two churches and five or six small dive resorts. Our home base was the Little Cayman Beach Resort, an all-inclusive watersports haven within minutes of the famed Bloody Bay Wall. So far, so good.

The dive club that agreed to be scrutinized was a group of 12 from the ice fields of Minnesota who called themselves the Gadbois Guppies, after Jack and Deb Gadbois who run the trips. Certainly the tropical latitudes and laid-back attitudes of Little Cayman would thaw this crowd out and the funky action would pulse. I was counting on it.

So, as the Island Air twin-engine airplane touched down on Little Cayman's grass runway, I wondered what they'd really be like. Probably crazy wrestling fans, right? With a governor like Jesse Ventura they had to be nuts—a bunch of

late-night WWF-ers who dressed like purple Vikings, howled like Timberwolves and danced on tables. Having experienced this kind of activity at dive resorts before, I was prepared. My Save-A-Dive kit included a large supply of Advil, Visine and Tums.

The Guppies had arrived a couple of days before me—all the more reason to believe they'd be lubed up. I headed for the pool-side bar in search of Gupsters. In one corner I spotted a yellow bikini napping and holding her man's hand.

Near the bar, sitting under a big umbrella, I saw six middle-aged folks. They were as still as statues, staring head long into 400-page novels. Could these be my wild and crazy Gups? The city library was rowdier than this bunch. But with no one else in sight, I moved in tentatively.

Nah, they didn't fit the profile. Two young girls splashed at the edge of the pool. Not them either. Near the bar, sit-

ting under a big umbrella, I saw six middle-aged folks. They were as still as statues, staring head long into 400-page novels. Could these be my wild and crazy Gups? The city library was rowdier than this bunch. But with no one else in sight, I moved in tentatively.

"Excuse me," I said sheepishly, not wanting to shatter their dome of silence. "I'm looking for Jack and Deb. The, uh, Guppies."

"Hi, I'm Deb," a perky woman said, carefully putting down her copy of

The Guppies.



Heaven and Earth by Nora Roberts.

"Uh, hi. I'm Fred Garth. The writer."

"Oh hi. Glad to meet you. Jack's in

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CAYMAN



town, but he'll be back soon."

"Okay," I said.

"Fred, this is Reg and Joan McNutt."

"Hi."

"And this is Bob and Denise Hoke."

"Pleased to meet you," I said, wondering where their Viking horns were.

"And this is Mary Francis. We just call her MF."

"MF?" I asked with surprise as she giggled.

That one hit me from left field. Maybe there was some spark in this engine.

"Like I said," Deb continued, "Jack's in town. He and John are meeting with the Constable."

"The Constable?" I asked.

"Oh yeah, well, John had some 30-30 bullets in his dive bag and security at the Grand Cayman airport confiscated it."

"Bullets?" I stammered. Did these characters have some bite in 'em?

"Yeah. But only 12. They were for his high-powered deer rifle. See, he also uses his dive bag for his deer hunting gear and I guess he just forgot to take the bullets out."

"Oh," I said, "and what's the Constable's position?"

"We're not sure," Deb said casually. "They've already searched his hotel room and didn't find any weapons so it should all work out."

I was glad to hear that none of the Guppies were packing fire power. Airport security doesn't like that kind of thing these days. For a moment, I felt like I was slipping into the movie *Fargo*. I'm not sure if it was that Minnesota accent or the ammo story, but I kept my guard up.

Just then, Jack and Bullet John showed up. They'd hit him with a fine of \$312 and, of course, kept the ammunition.

"It was an expensive lesson, I guess," BJ admitted. "I guess I need to buy another dive bag to keep my stuff separated."

Jack, the group leader and owner of Underwater Schools of America in Long Lake, MN, since 1972, just smiled. Cha-ching!

This initial meeting started out with the speed of a drugged snail, but had suddenly jolted into fast forward. And the quirky plot line had just begun. I soon found out that the Guppies could handle themselves in the big fishbowl.

They came from their cold world to Little Cayman for camaraderie, a laid-back lifestyle and above all, the world-class diving. Although the Minnesotaites were first-timers to this island, they took to the reefs like it was ice fishing. Plus they'd done most of the major Caribbean hot spots already: Belize, Cozumel, Honduran Bay Islands, etc. During the next few days we dove into seductive sites like Mixing Bowl, where the wall begins as shallow as 15 feet and plunges into sea-monster depths. Jack

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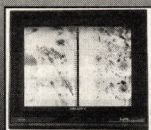
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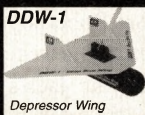
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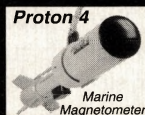
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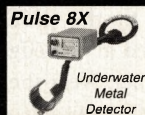
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buzzed around with his camera shooting everyone and everything back-dropped in red-rope sponges, giant barrel sponges, tube sponges, corals, tarpon, sharks, rays and turtles. Dottie, our intrepid dive guide with her Billy Idol hairdo and a neon tie-died dive suit, hunted down the little stuff—Lettuce-leaf Sea Slugs, Christmas Tree Worms, pipefish, the works—and showed 'em off through her trusty magnifying glass. She was good with that glass but, trust me, you haven't lived until you've seen Dottie face down on the deck of the dive boat, doing her impression of a Lettuce-leaf Sea Slug. She's got the act down pat; it was art in motion.

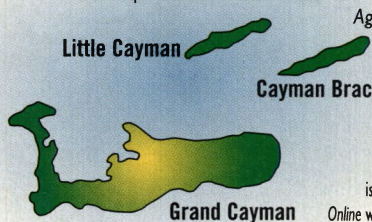
So there we were, pumping out three dives a day, knocking back three hardy meals with dessert, and spending down time in the hot tub, on the beach or at the bar. It was like, "Minnesota? What's a Minnesota?" The Guppies were in their groove. Still, the belly dancing on the bar or toga outfits weren't happening. Then after dinner one evening, someone pulled out a deck of cards. I wondered if that was their dirty secret. High-stakes poker and rock-gut whiskey. Bullet John, Karen, Deb, MF and Sue Phillips approached me with

Jack buzzed around with his camera shooting everyone and everything back-dropped in red-rope sponges, giant barrel sponges, tube sponges, corals, tarpon, sharks, rays and turtles.



SkinDiver GUIDE • The Cayman Islands

GETTING THERE: Cayman Airways flies daily from Miami and Houston to Grand Cayman; Island Air daily from Grand Cayman to her sister islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. Cayman Airways (800) 422-9626 www.caymanairways.com • Island Air (345) 949-5252 www.islandaircayman.com. **FACTS & TIPS:** **Best Time To Visit:** Year-round. **Topside Climate:** May to August: 80°F average; September to April: mid 70s°F. **Water Temperature:** 78 to 82°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1 CI Dollar = 1.25 US Dollar. USD accepted. **Time Difference:** EST minus one hour. **LIVE-ABOARDS:** Cayman



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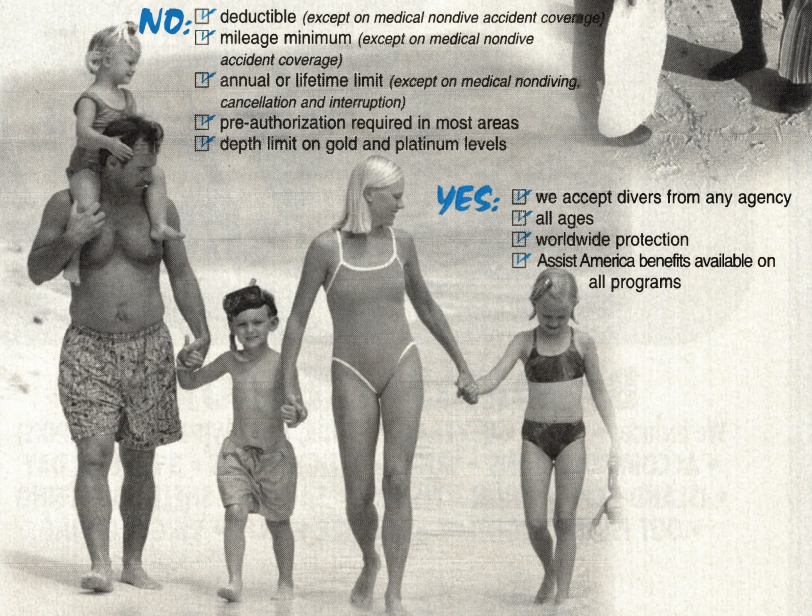
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CAYMAN



A few of us skipped an afternoon dive for an island excursion with Sommer, the resort's bubbly blonde tour guide. Surprisingly, there's more to see on Little Cayman besides creamy beaches and soothing shades of blue.

shifty eyes.

"What're we gonna play?" I asked.

"It's called, Screw Your Neighbor," Sue said.

And so it was. Unfortunately, no money was exchanged because after a heated match, I won. The next night my beginner's luck crashed and burned. I figured I'd been set up and soon all my dive gear would be distributed among the club members. But no, MF walked away with the prize, which was just bragging rights. Were these folks really that kind and gentle?

Before I knew it I was feeling more Guppy-like all the time. A few of us skipped an afternoon dive for an island excursion with Sommer, the resort's bubbly blond tour guide. Surprisingly, there's more to see on Little Cayman besides creamy beaches and soothing shades of blue. Sommer kicked off the tour hand-feeding old bananas to a couple of gnarly iguanas. That was definitely cool. Then we hiked deep into the woods to see the Pirate's Well—a natural sink hole, where the Pirate's are said to have dipped their fresh water. More intriguing to me was the permanent rope that led underwater into the

PHOTO: FRED GARTH

freshwater cave. Apparently, some cave divers have entered the well and found an exit to the sea. We took Sommer's word for it. On the way through the woods, she answered our endless "What's this?" and "What's that?" grilling. "Oh, that's a gumbo limbo tree" or "that's a silver palm" or "those are fire ants biting your feet." That kind of thing. To test her ebullient spirit, I waited for a dull moment and asked my favorite stupid tourist question.

"So, Sommer, how far is the water from the beach?"

She blinked a couple of times, shook her head and did the intelligent thing—ignored me. The tour continued with the National Trust Building and a view of the red-footed booby sanctuary, as well as some stuffed island wildlife in glass display boxes. A short walk away is the Island History Museum, but it was closed that day, so we toured the old graveyard and ran into *THE* policeman in *THE* police car.

As the week wound down our diving cup ranneth over. We'd seen sharks, rays, turtles, tons of little critters, Dottie's rendition of a neon sea slug and the radical reef formations of Bloody Bay Wall. Sure, this group was more Garrison Keillor than Jesse Ventura, but hey, Keillor's more my type anyway. Careful in both safety and conservation, the Guppies had won my respect, even without doing the toga tango.

On the final evening, Jack and Deb capped the trip with a wacky awards ceremony. Costumes were required. Bob the Attorney was in a grass skirt; Sally the Shrink had some lovely Dramamine earrings; and Peter the Shrink wore an Immodium lapel. Yeah, the Gups were breaking loose. Then Jack pulled out his private stash of old *Sea Hunt* TV shows and we showed our age. We sat at the bar, transfixed with the TV as we sipped on some island rum and watched Mike Nelson in his endless pursuit of the perfect underwater fight scene. It wasn't enough that this crowd have been diving hard and heavy for 10 days. They just couldn't get enough of a good thing. 🐟

Special thanks to the Guppies for letting me crash their party, Cayman Airways and Little Cayman Beach Resort.

NOT STUFF! 28 Top Gear Picks for the New Season

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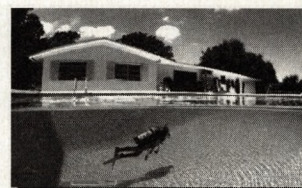
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UNDER REVIEW

It's one of life's cruel little ironies that very few divers actually get to experience the full effects of the vibrant colors of the underwater world. After all, it's the kaleidoscope of colors that drew many of us to scuba diving in the first place. So, it's not uncommon to hear a few divers express their disappointment when comparing their actual dives to photos they saw in a brochure. Why? Because too many divers are still diving color blind. However, if you are one of those divers, don't hang up your dive gear yet. Aquacolor Productions has a solution: a dive mask that has scientifically accurate, underwater color-correction.

To understand the significance of the Aquacolor mask, we must first understand the problem. Why do we lose color? Simply put, we lose the ability to see color underwater because of the adverse affects of water on light. This happens in several ways, but the end result is the same: as we lose light underwater, we lose color. As we move down the water column, reds, oranges, purples and yellows often appear brownish, gray or even black. For many divers, the loss and distortion of color often means a less enjoyable and somewhat unsatisfying dive



A Sergeant Major over a lush coral reef, as seen with an Aquacolor mask.

Banishing the Blues

TEXT BY
DAVID
WILKINSON

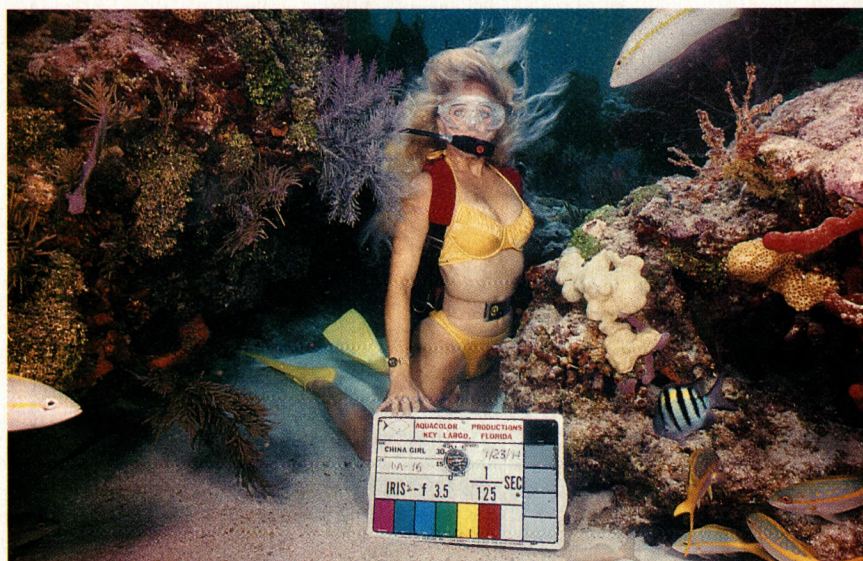
(How many times have you heard someone on the dive boat whine "The brochure picture was much prettier.")

Well, divers will whine no more. The Aquacolor dive mask, made with the same patented, world-renowned, color-correcting photographic filter formulas that won an international gold medal from the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, corrects the loss and distortion of color underwater, and provides enhanced definition and depth perception when viewing coral reefs and marine life. This ability to see the full range of the color spectrum, as well as the overall improvement in the diver's vision, allows the Aquacolor diver to experience a more satisfying and fulfilling dive.

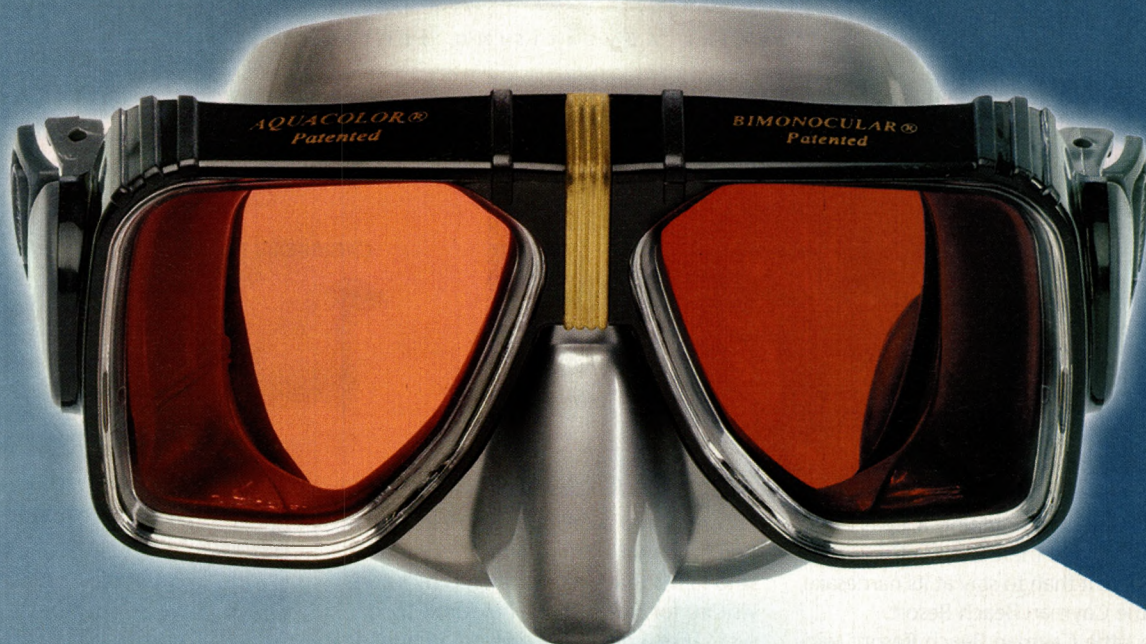
Aside from the groundbreaking color-correction technology, Aquacolor's dive mask has several other qualities that separate it from standard dive masks. First, the Aquacolor mask is billed as "fogless forever." Those of us that have experienced an Aquacolor dive know this isn't just another scheme dreamed up by an overzealous marketing department—we know it as fact. And, just as impressive as its fogless component are the patented Bimonocular lenses, which add a safety component to the mask by making possible the scientifically accurate correction of the entire color spectrum without severe light loss while the diver's eyes adjust to diminishing light at depth. Then, once on the surface, the lenses serve as 100% UV blocking sunglasses. These extraordinary lenses are also ophthalmologist and optometrist approved for optical excellence. Finally, the sleek look and feel of the top-quality opaque skirts allow for a mask that is fashionable AND comfortable.

The Aquacolor dive mask is truly a revolutionary piece of dive equipment, one that legitimately turns ordinary recreational dives into extraordinary recreational dives. So, if you are tired of diving color blind, invest in an Aquacolor dive mask and see what you have been missing.

For more information on the Aquacolor dive masks, and for more detailed information on the technology behind the color-correcting fogless lenses, please visit www.aquacolor.com.



Aquacolor's mask allows divers to experience the true colors of the underwater world.



STILL DIVING COLOR BLIND?

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BEFORE

"I recently had the opportunity to dive with an Aquacolor® mask in Bonaire and found the results to be astounding." - Jenn Miller

SKIN DIVER
AUG 2001
p.31



Aquacolor® Bimonocular® dive masks are the first and only dive masks in the world to reveal the scientifically true colors of the magnificent underwater world that are otherwise lost. See what you've been missing... brilliant reds, oranges, purples and subtle pastel colors.

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Happy Divers

Little Cayman is certainly a jewel of the Caribbean, and there is no better way to appreciate it than to stay at its namesake, the Little Cayman Beach Resort.

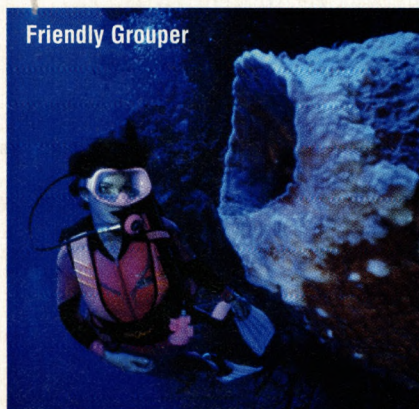
The Little Cayman Beach Resort, winner of international awards too numerous to mention, has been open since 1994. Indigenous plants and palm trees

coconuts and a calabash-full of imagination have managed to produce one-of-a-kind items that will be admired by future visitors for years to come. Time to get wet? Take a dip in the swimming pool or relax those tired muscles in the Jacuzzi, as you watch small brown lizards sunning themselves on the deck.

Little Cayman Beach Resort

TEXT VICKI WHEATON

surround buildings that have been designed with old-style Caymanian homes in mind. Each room is beautifully appointed and surprisingly large, with pastel colors and floral patterns adorning the walls, bed linens and curtains. When you take a stroll outdoors, soft white sand sifts through your toes as the sun and the soft breezes kiss your cheeks. If you desire a beverage, why not pull up a chair at "Beach Nuts" bar? Make sure that you take the time to admire all the folk art attached to every inch of the ceiling. Many of these home-made pieces have been left by appreciative guests, who with some paint, a few

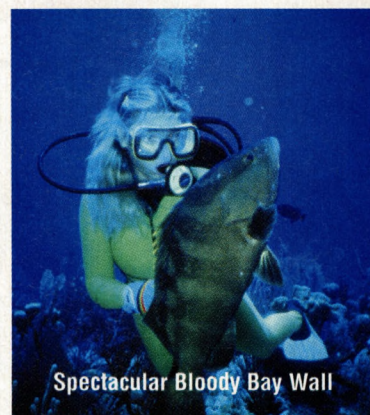


Friendly Grouper

Little Cayman Beach Resort has a gym for the exercise addict, along with a game room for those who crave indoor recreation. Your spouse can enjoy a spot of pool as you relax with a massage at the spa. The resort also offers a fully functional conference room—The Grouper Room—that can accommodate up to 100 people. You'll know it's time for a break when the bell is rung for breakfast, lunch and dinner at the charming on-site restaurant.

A number of people visit Little Cayman just to appreciate true island life. Here you can walk or borrow a complimentary bicycle from the resort and travel for half an hour without seeing a car. What you can't miss is how friendly everyone is. Jerry Hawk, manager of the resort, says that he has never before lived in a community where there is such camaraderie.

Have we mentioned the diving? Little Cayman is one of the top diving destinations in the world. Famous Bloody Bay Wall is the stuff of legend, where the reef life is so indescribably beautiful, it'll spoil you for anywhere else. Here, the marine environment thrives, and coral is every color of the rainbow. From experts to amateurs, just about every diver has praised Little



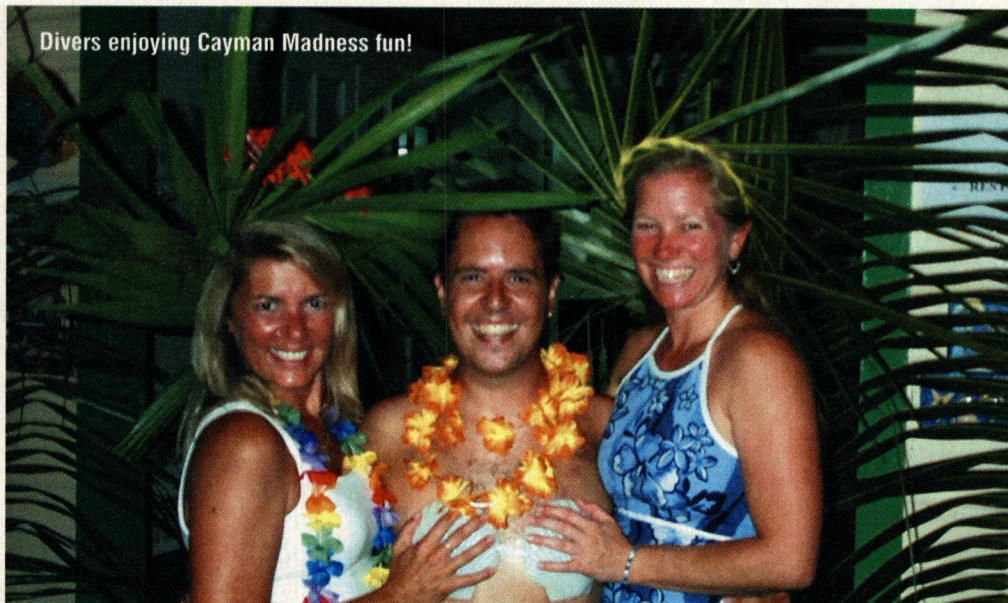
Spectacular Bloody Bay Wall

Cayman as one of the world's premier dive destinations with pristine quality, excellent visibility and incredible diving. Little Cayman Beach Resort is a full service resort, and that includes a top quality dive operation, Reef Divers. They have a full complement of dive instructors, and over half of them are certified in Nitrox diving. You can also become a certified Open Water diver, advance your skills or get your Nitrox certification. No matter what you choose, you'll be learning in ideal conditions. Reef Divers has a range of a la carte dives available as well as package deals. Shore dive, or join the crew on one of their custom designed super dive boats. You can rent all the gear you need, and should your own equipment suffer a boo-boo, they stock replacement parts and offer a repair service.

Whether you just want to relax, enjoy watersports or witness some of the best diving sites in the world, Little Cayman Beach Resort and Reef Divers has it all. Book online, or call them for more details and reservations. No matter how much air you have left in your dive tank, Little Cayman will take your breath away.

For more information call toll free (888) 718-7400, e-mail: bobsoto1@candw.ky or visit the website at www.littlecayman.com.

Divers enjoying Cayman Madness fun!



Cayman Madness

Every September, divers, much like the swallows of Capistrano, return to the Cayman Islands for what *Skin Diver* magazine has described as "the dive deal of a lifetime." This year will be no exception. For six weeks from September 5 to October 17, 2002, Bob Soto's Reef Divers in conjunction with major sponsors will offer a dive package that includes airfare, accommodation, a treasure hunt, parties, meal certificates and discounts on many other goods and services. Now in its ninth year, Cayman Madness has become exponentially popular since its beginnings, and with Reef Divers locations in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, participants can now choose between Cayman Madness and Sister Island Splash.

Your week will start with a flight to Grand Cayman on the national carrier Cayman Airways. The airline's U.S. hubs are Miami, Tampa and Houston, but additional connecting flight arrangements can easily be made at the time of your reservation. For those attending the Sister Island Splash, Cayman Airways or inter-island carrier Island Air will take you on to Cayman Brac or Little Cayman. Once you arrive in the Cayman Islands, prepare for lots of fun, lots of freebies and lots of diving! Every day you'll have a chance to dive the famous sites of one of the top dive destinations in the world. See the North Wall in Grand Cayman, visit the Capt. Keith Tibbetts in Cayman Brac, or witness the magnificent Bloody Bay

Wall in Little Cayman. Test the newest, state-of-the-art Dacor equipment, as well as Sea Vision Underwater Masks—the leader in underwater lens technology. Advance your photography skills with the Sea & Sea Underwater Camera Dive Program, including instruction on camera and strobe usage, and test dive their Motor Marine II advanced camera system.

The Underwater Treasure Hunt is a Cayman Madness favorite. This year, there will be over \$50,000 worth of prizes up for grabs. You can win products from Cetacea, Chammyz, Dacor, Sea & Sea, Tortuga Rum and Rumcakes, and Sea Vision, as well as magazine subscriptions to *Skin Diver*, *Rodale's Scuba Diving*, *Dive Training* and *Sport Diver* magazines. Hold on to your masks for the grand prizes, such as dive packages, land/dive packages and air/land/dive packages. One lucky person will even win a full return Cayman Madness trip for 2003.

If you think your days will be busy, just wait until the nights kick in. Hundreds of dollars worth of winnable restaurant certificates should help you fill up on some fabulous island chow at participating eateries. Friday night is Meet-The-Gang Party night. On Saturday, bring your grass skirt and lei along for the Luau. Sunday is your evening of rest to prepare you for Monday's Tortuga Rum Punch Steel Drum Party, Tuesday night's Caribbean Buffet and finally, Wednesday's BBQ luncheon after the Treasure Hunt. Whew! Be prepared to require more weight to dive as the week winds through.

As if all this wasn't enough—there's more. Accommodation on Grand Cayman offers four great choices: Treasure Island Resort, Seaview Hotel and Dive Resort, Plantation Village Condos and Regal Beach Club. In Cayman Brac, you'll stay at the Brac Reef Beach Resort, and in Little Cayman, where else but the Little Cayman Beach Resort. You'll also enjoy specially discounted rates from Coconut Car Rentals if you fancy your own transport.

For those who wish to visit depths beyond scuba, Atlantis Submarine's Deep Explorer takes two passen-

gers down to 800 feet. Make sure you take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime trip with your special Cayman Madness discount.

Oh, and how could we forget? You take home a genuine Cayman Madness T-shirt, a sought-after collector's item, complimentary with your package.

All this for as little as US\$1,099! So what are you waiting for? Book your vacation and sign up for Cayman Madness or Sister Island Splash. Join in "The biggest dive event in the history of the world," and see that once you've dived in Cayman's waters, you'll be forever hooked.

"We stake our reputation on everyone having a great experience." —Ron Kipp

For more information call toll free: (888) 718-7400, e-mail bobsoto1@candw.ky or visit the website at www.caymanmadness.com.



PHOTOS RON KIPP

CAREERS

WITH THE RACE TO FIND NEW SOURCES OF energy beneath the sea, and our growing population ever more reliant on the infrastructure surrounding inland water, the need for well-trained professional divers is greater than ever. And, the rewards to those who choose a career in commercial diving are significant. Around the world, commercial divers are installing and maintaining oil and gas drilling platforms, and fiber optic cables are being laid and buried by divers throughout the Gulf of Mexico, California and Japan. At the same time, dams, bridges, ships and shipyards are all in constant need of inspection and repair. And by nature of the

hostile environments they find themselves in, the equipment and techniques used by today's commercial divers are highly advanced and require extensive specialized training.

For over 33 years, the Divers Institute of Technology (DIT) in Seattle, Washington, has been producing some of the best-trained and successful diving professionals in the world. With safety as the foremost concern, students at DIT are taught the skills that will make them valuable assets in the commercial diving industry. Diving physics and physiology, communications, remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), underwater cutting and welding, mixed gas diving, deep diving and hyperbaric chamber



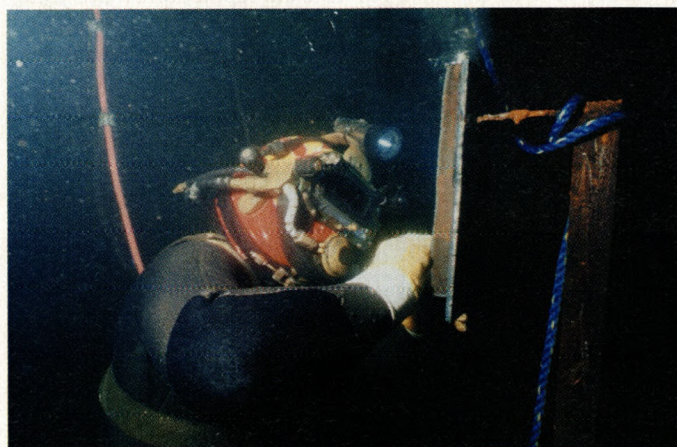
meters). This unique training ability gives DIT an important advantage over other dive schools. They are the only U.S. commercial diving school whose training is approved not only by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), but also conforms to International Dive Training Standards (DIT's training program is recognized by British Columbia Worker's Compensation Board as complying with the requirements of the Canadian Standards (CSA Z275.4-97).

Without this, divers can find it very difficult, if not impossible, to attain work outside the United States.

Cutting Edge Diver Education

Diver's Institute of Technology

TEXT BY BRAD DOANE



operations are among the skills required in today's commercial diving jobs and taught at DIT. However, what makes DIT truly different is that their location and training facilities allow students to train in the natural environment, not in tanks. The flagship of their training facilities is the 65-foot diving tender "Response" that allows students realistic experience in deep diving and surface decompression oxygen techniques in open water environments (to 165 feet/50

However, the best training in the world is no guarantee of attaining work. That's why DIT puts such great emphasis on job placement for their graduates. In fact, DIT's Placement Assistance service has a 94 percent success rate in placing its students. This placement service begins even before the students graduate. While in their final month, information about the availability of the graduating students is sent out to the DIT's extensive network of diving companies. In addition, all graduates are given a one year membership to the Association of Diving Contractors (ADC), an important step in becoming a part of the professional diving industry. And, even when a student leaves the institute, these benefits continue. The Divers Institute of Technology's placement service is available for life to its graduates. Also available is free lifetime retraining in specific course subjects such as welding, Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) hydraulic tools and more.

For more information about the opportunities available through the Divers Institute of Technology, check out their website at www.diversinstitute.com or call them at (800) 634-8377.



Name: Jim Brandt

Position: Course Director, Pro Dive

Profile: Lead Course Director for Pro Dive's Resort Operation Specialist (ROS) Program

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION OF CHUCK?

It was the common impression that I get from many of the students that come through Pro Dive...he had a lot of enthusiasm towards preparing for a new career in the dive industry.

WHAT STOOD OUT MOST ABOUT CHUCK AS A STUDENT?

His eagerness to learn. He was a sponge for new information and experience.

DID YOU FEEL THAT CHUCK WAS WELL PREPARED TO BEGIN HIS CAREER IN THE DIVE INDUSTRY?

There was no doubt that Chuck had strong skills upon completing the IDC and that he would do well as a dive instructor. After gaining some experience in Wisconsin, then returning to Pro Dive for the MSDT and ROS programs, Chuck's skills and confidence had grown even stronger. He was well prepared to start a successful diving career.

In Search of New and Exciting Career Opportunities?

Teacher and student speak about the Pro Dive experience

TEXT BY FELIX HUANG
AND HOPE GERHARD



Name: Chuck Sasso

Age: 44

Attended Pro Dive: June 2000 and March 2001

Previous Occupation: Mechanical Engineer—
Madison, WI

Current Employment: Maui Dive Shop—Maui, HI

WHAT WAS YOUR CAREER PRIOR TO BECOMING A DIVE INSTRUCTOR?

I worked as a Mechanical Engineer, specializing in heating, air conditioning and energy efficiency. Although I'd spent many happy years in that occupation, my wife Vicki and I decided it was time for a lifestyle and occupation change;

one that would accommodate a better climate (than Wisconsin) as well as our love for diving!

HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON PRO DIVE FOR YOUR TRAINING NEEDS?

As I started to explore instructor career training, I kept coming back to Pro Dive as being the best fit for me. With an outstanding reputation in the industry, a strong relationship with dive operators for lifetime career placement services, as well as a location right on the ocean with all facilities on site, they were exactly what I was looking for.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PRO DIVE?

I was able to learn so much from the vast experience of the Course Directors and other Master Instructors; I really took advantage of that. Not a day goes by that I don't apply what I learned from them to my job now.

WHY DID YOU RETURN TO PRO DIVE FOR ADVANCE CAREER TRAINING?

For my long term plans, I knew that it would excel my career in the industry and make me more marketable. And after seeing their operations and meeting the staff of Pro Dive during my IDC, I couldn't imagine training anywhere else.

HOW DID PRO DIVE PREPARE YOU FOR A CAREER IN THE DIVE INDUSTRY?

Besides the education, experience and confidence I gained by going through the courses, I also gained practical experience during the Resort Operation Specialist program and was able to use it at my position at Maui Dive Shop, Hawaii's largest diving retailer.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR PEOPLE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN DIVING?

Be sure you have a love for diving and don't be afraid to work hard—both physically and in improving your diving skills and knowledge. When you end up being placed in locations as great as Maui, for instance, it is all worth it!

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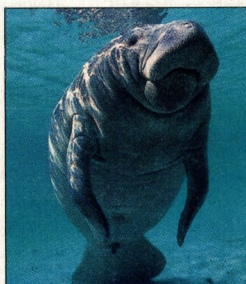
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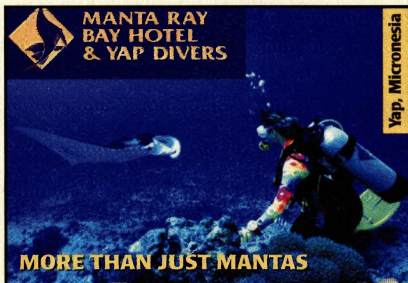


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Test Pilots

BY KARL SHREEVES

IT WAS JUST A WRIST SLATE, BUT IT LOOKED LIKE AN IDEA with merit. After all, on some dives it seems like I use a slate more than my computer, and it's a pain to dig one out to write or read. The concept looked good; there didn't seem to be any significant drawbacks or hazards, so I gave a wrist slate a try for several dives. The results:

Test dive one: Hate it. Interfered with gauge placement and was never in the right spot for effective writing. Need to readjust and reconfigure.

Test dive two: Still hate it. Needs further readjusting.

Test dive three: Hate it even more since nothing I do seems to make it better.

Test dive four: Hate it, squared.

Decision: No wrist slate for me.

Let me emphasize that I'm not bashing nor condemning

wrist slates. Lots of divers like them for certain applications, and there's nothing inherently wrong with using one. They're just not for me. The point I'm making is that while new tek equipment and tek configurations may have theoretical merits and flaws, the only way to know the real merits and flaws is to dive them. In a sense, as a tek diver you're sometimes a bit of a "test pilot."

As in the wrist slate example, not every "test" is a big deal. Worst case, I'd pull the thing off and jam it in my pocket. At the other extreme, sometimes you need to progress from easy to more challenging dives, because you're dealing with life support equipment or substantial gear configuration changes.

For example, I'm diving the Kirby Morgan M-48TM Supermask, which is a new fullface mask that appears well-suited to tekking. It em-

TOTALLY TEK

Without trying new things, there's no progress. You can't innovate without experimentation, any more than you can reach the bottom without leaving the surface.

Testing new tek equipment and techniques in swimming pools, rather than open water, cuts back on the risks associated with first use.



TOTALYTEK plays mouth pods on your second stages that make it possible to switch gases without gas switch blocks and special plumbing. Rather, it uses standard second stages for switches and sharing just as tek divers normally do, plus you can still use a second stage with a standard mouthpiece. Divers not using the system can breathe off second stages with mouth pods because there's still a mouthpiece.

But it is a new tek tool, so I didn't pull it on for the first time and make a Trimix jump to 300 feet. If there were any unexpected flaws with the way I was using the M-48TM for tek diving, that's not where I wanted to find out. Rather, my first dives were in a pool, initially with the mask and a single mouth pod. Following that,

Trying major equipment configurations that depart from what the tek community already knows to work isn't something I can recommend. It's not like test piloting a new gauge or a different BC. You have to accept some risk, and it's not something for the beginner, obviously.

still in the pool, I practiced using the system with deco cylinders and interacting with another diver not using the system.

Next, I made several open water dives using the M-48TM on shallow no stop open water dives. Only after I'd racked up several hours in the mask did I start making actual tek deco dives with it, beginning with simple, single deco gas dives.

Why Bother?

Obviously, I accepted some risks by test piloting the M-48TM. Since tek divers already have a fairly uniform and

accepted diving protocol, one might wonder why any diver would try something different. Doesn't what we do now work?

Of course it does. But, to get what the tek community currently enjoys, someone had to try something different. The standard tek configuration we enjoy today exists only because tek pioneers Parker Turner, Bill Main, Billy Deans, Sheck Exley and others test piloted something different. Without trying new things, there's no progress. You can't innovate without experimentation, any more than you can reach the bottom without leaving the surface.

One risk decoy tek divers face is an oxygen convulsion. Convulsions are relatively harmless, but with a standard mouthpiece, a convulsing diver will likely drown. A fullface mask greatly reduces that risk—hence there's an interest in a fullface mask suited to tek diving.

Trying major equipment configurations that depart from what the tek community already knows to work isn't something I can recommend. It's not like test piloting a new gauge or a different BC. You have to accept some risk, and it's not something for the beginner, obviously. You also need a willing teammate, and to realize that some divers will question or snipe just because you do something different. All

this goes with the territory.

The reward is that you learn new ways to do things or to not do things. Done with caution, it's fun and challenging, which is why many experienced tek divers routinely try major and minor innovations. Other tekkers tried fullface masks before me, and I'm just one of several experimenting with the M-48TM and perhaps other fullface masks. Maybe fullface masks will be part of tomorrow's standard tek kit. Maybe not.

The first step to finding out is to try it.

Karl Shreeves is VP, Technical Development for PADI and DSAT. 

Jonathan Bird Photo Course

Emmy Award-winning underwater cinematographer and Skin Diver contributor Jonathan Bird is teaching comprehensive underwater photography courses in tropical locations throughout 2002 and 2003, beginning in August on the Fiji Aggressor. Learn from a pro while diving the best spots on Earth.

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To learn more, call (345) 949-2022,
or visit www.caymanmadness.ky.

Rapid Deployment Search and Rescue/Recovery Course

The Cleveland Lakefront State Park, Dive Rescue and Evidence Recovery agency will be hosting a "Rapid Deployment Search and Rescue/Recovery" course September 24 to 27, 2002. The course is designed for dive team members and tenders, as well as public safety officials in law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies, but any certified diver is welcome. Fees are \$330/diver and \$130/tender.

For more info, contact Officer Kevin Erskine at (216) 881-8141, ext. 3024.

Scuba Extasea Show in Denver

This year's Scuba Extrasea Show will take place from Sept. 27 to 29 at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, CO. A full schedule of seminars will feature presentations on a variety of topics, such as exotic dive spots, underwater photography techniques and the newest in scuba gear and products. An amateur underwater photo competition will also be held.

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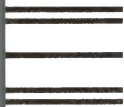
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A D I N D E X

Ghost Whales of Churchill

The arctic air was crisp as I waited for my dive buddy Rob, who was still in the Zodiac, to don his drysuit. A light breeze rippled across the smooth surface to where I was floating, sending an icy chill down my back. In the distance, I felt, more than heard, the whoosh of whales spouting. Squinting into the sun, I saw a pod of Belugas change their direction and head straight for us. Filled with overwhelming



excitement, I fumbled for my camera. Within seconds we were surrounded! Their white backs gleamed in the late afternoon sun. Looking below, I could barely make out their faint outlines through the light green hue of the murky mix of fresh- and saltwater. Although the whale-watching guides told us, "They will only come close if you're snorkeling at the surface," I hoped to interact with them on scuba.

Text and Photography by Barb Roy

d a ' s S u b - A r c t i c



A pod of Belugas flashes past
in an ephemeral moment.

Within 20 minutes, the cold had embraced me. Fortunately, a couple of critters appeared to distract my chills. Red burrowing sea cucumbers, mussels and a strange-looking lobster with thick claws occupied the bottom of a round indentation.

It was this hope that brought me to the recognized "Polar Bear Capitol of the World"—the remote town of Churchill, on the western shore of Hudson Bay in the Canadian province of Manitoba. The town has successfully survived by marketing its natural resources through tourism. November



is great for Polar Bears. November to March, the Aurora Borealis ignite the night sky, although I was able to view them in July as well. From late May through September, birding is excellent. But in July and August, the area explodes with life—colorful, scented wildflowers drape the landscape, as tourists and naturalists pour in from around the world for a chance to view the annual migration of approximately 3,500 Beluga Whales.

When I arrived, numerous sightseeing tour businesses were everywhere. My favorite was a custom white bus on immense tundra tires, used for Polar Bear viewing. At first I considered camping (day temperatures reaching the high 70°Fs), but the insistent mosquitoes quickly changed my mind.

Usually the motels and B&Bs are booked well in advance, but luck was on my side. Restaurants, a mini-mall with a theater, two grocery stores and an Eskimo Museum stretch along several main roads. Due to heavy snowfall, spindly pine trees sprouted from a sea

Northern Exposure

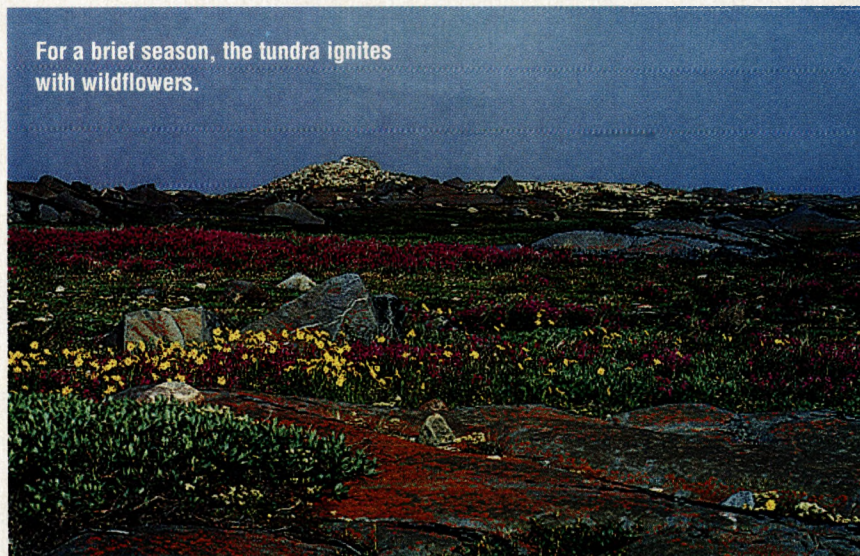
When I wasn't exploring underwater, I was out driving around and making new friends. Most of the roads dead-ended within 20 miles of town. The downtown Parks Department educational center seemed to offer the best historical information on places like Cape Mary and The Prince of Whales Fort.

Near the airport, a large plane missed the runway several years ago, leaving a skeleton shell behind (great for climbing on). The engine was close by, but not attached.

Further down the road, we found a team of sled dogs and the sleigh used for winter tours. After playing with a free-roaming puppy, we headed for a massive ship in the background, beckoning further investigation.

Arriving at the site of the M/V *Ithaca*, Rob pulled out his shotgun to take along as Polar Bear repellent. After washing ashore in a bad storm in 1961, the *Ithaca* sits high and dry due to low tide. With its rusted mass towering above us, we peered inside—very cool.

To end a great trip, Rob entertained me with his Polar Bear policing stories. He was part of a team of skilled professionals who are annually called upon to gather up wandering bears venturing too close to town. The bears are then taken to the Polar Bear Jail, where they remain until the pack-ice returns, then being airlifted out. What a job.



Getting to Churchill

If you want to see the Belugas, book passage on VIA Rail out of Winnipeg for a two-day train ride north. The roomettes are designed for one, approximately 4 feet by 6 feet in size. Within, a comfy chair to sit and look out an oversized window; a private toilet to prop up your feet; a sink that pulls down from the wall, complete with running water; and a pull-down bed that covers the entire room. Showers and food service are in another car. However, the rhythm of the train is ever so relaxing. Overall, quite an escapade!

of giant, smooth boulders around the town, bordered by hearty green grasses and more vibrant flowers.

Later that afternoon, I met up with a friend and dive buddy, Rob Pritchett, who is a RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) officer and Churchill resident. We loaded the trailer of his four-wheeler with dive gear to catch high tide (water exchanges here vary up to an amazing 45 feet). Since Churchill has no dive



Near the airport a large plane missed the runway several years ago, leaving a skeleton shell behind (great for climbing on). The engine was close by, but not attached.

center, everything must be brought in, including tanks of air. I discovered Sea North Tours hires out their Zodiacs (with an operator) for snorkelers and divers, but can be pricey unless the cost is shared with a group.

After a bumpy ride across open fields, we headed down a dirt road, overgrown with vegetation, to a calm pebble beach. *Not bad*, I thought, taking out my drysuit. All around were pieces of mangled iron and steel wreckage. They had been bleeding rust for so long, I mistook them for part of the rocky shore.

"Ships wreck here all the time," said Rob, while shaking out his drysuit. "They wait too long and get caught in the bergs [icebergs] or wash ashore in bad weather. Our storms get real nasty around here."

As we descended, life was almost

nonexistent over a bare ocean floor down to 30 feet. Within 20 minutes, the cold had embraced me. Fortunately, a couple of critters appeared to distract my chills. Red burrowing sea cucumbers, mussels and a strange-looking lobster with thick claws occupied the bottom of a round indentation.

What looked like tiny bugs (isopods) darted about in mid-water. Later, I found the scarcity of marine life in the

Belugas I hoped to see. And as I floated next to the Zodiac, waiting for Rob, I was about to get my chance.

With a splash, Rob was in the water and we descended to 55 feet on a flat pinnacle in Button Bay, not far from the Churchill River. Visibility gradually increased with depth. As sparse as life was in this 37° F wilderness, anemones, clusters of pink soft corals and several dozen decorator crabs flourished in concentrated sections. As usual, I carried two cameras to document as much as possible. A high-pitched chatter of whistles and clicks seemed to tease us just out of sight. Doubting the Belugas would ever approach us underwater, I went about obtaining macro images as quickly as possible, since my fingers were already growing numb.

Suddenly, Rob's frantic movements caught my attention. As I looked up, a massive wall of white whales filled my view. In awe, we watched as 30 or so came within 20 feet, parted into

CONTACT INFO: Churchill Chamber of Commerce (204) 675-2022 or (888) 389-2327 www.cancom.net/~cccomin/ • Parks Canada (204) 675-8863 • Travel Manitoba (204) 945-3777 (tourist info center) or (800) 665-0040 www.travelmanitoba.com • VIA Rail (800) 561-3949 www.viarail.ca



shallows was due to the scrape of winter's pack ice.

But then, I hadn't trekked all the way to Churchill for the invertebrates. It was

two sections and swam circles around us. They bobbed their flexible heads (their cervical vertebrae are not fused) and swayed their 10- to 15-foot-long, one-ton bodies. Light vibrations emanated as they curiously bounced sonar echolocation waves off us for a better understanding of what we were.

"Oh, shisnic!" I grunted through my regulator, realizing I hadn't fired off a single wide-angle shot. For 10 minutes they stayed, sometimes pausing just out of reach, possibly to get a closer look at us. A baby, still gray in color, hovered close to its mother. Were we the subject of their study? Maybe our unusual structure and sounds (tanks and bubbles) sparked an interest to learn more. Nonetheless, there we calmly sat, turning into scuba popsicles, experiencing an encounter of a lifetime. 🐟

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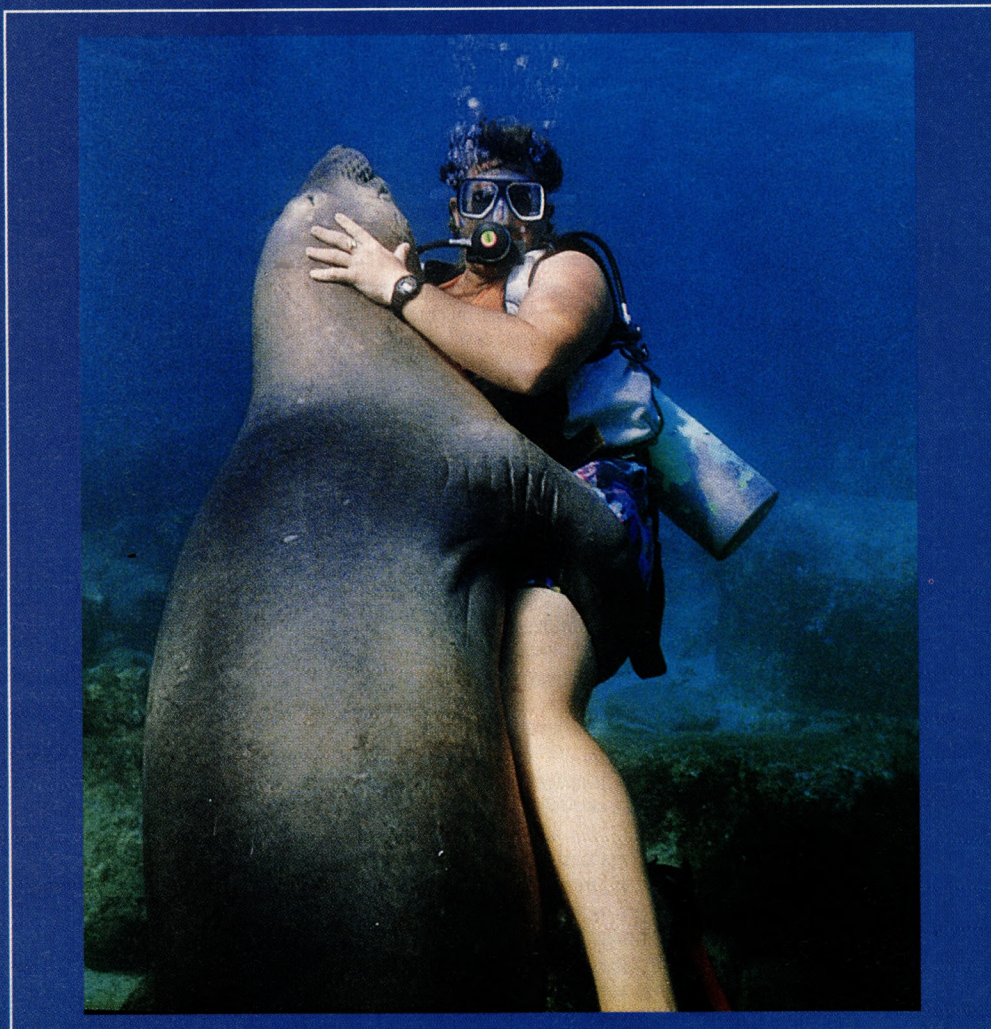
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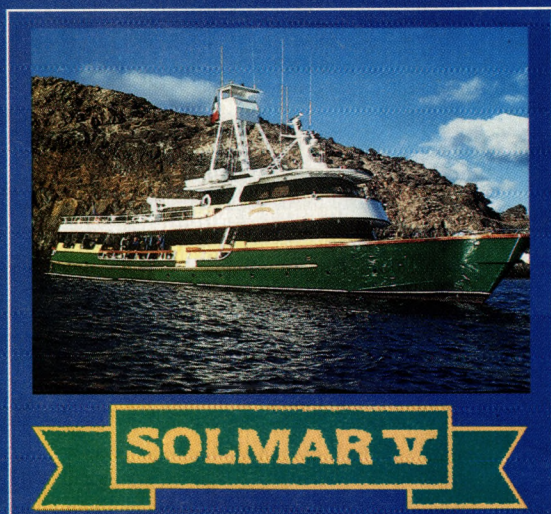
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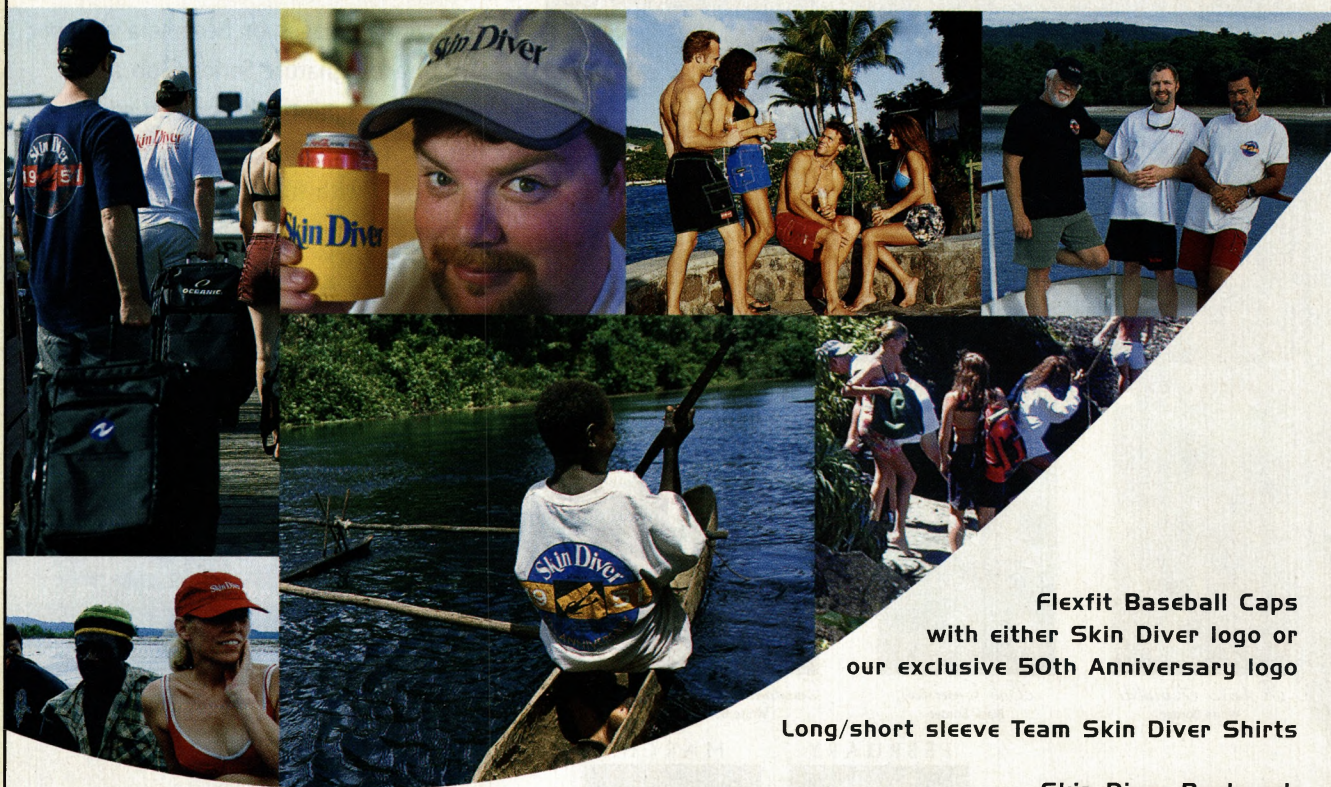
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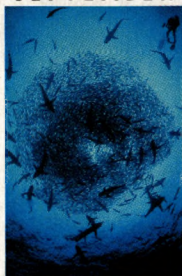
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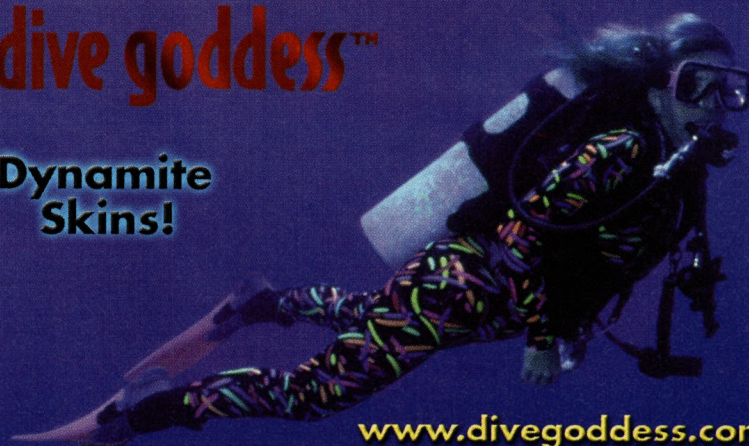
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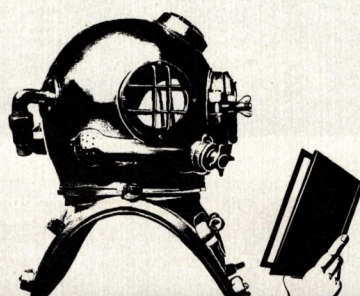
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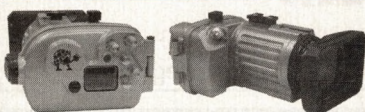
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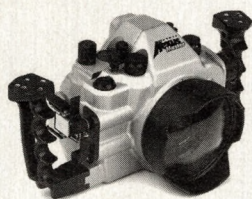
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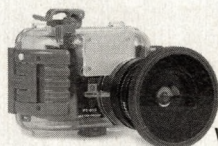
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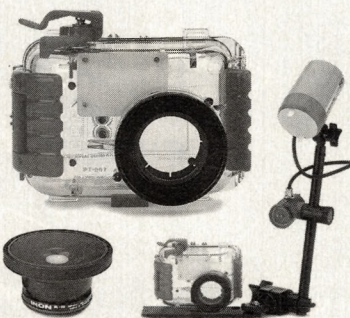
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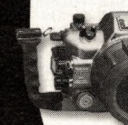
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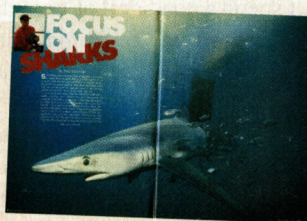
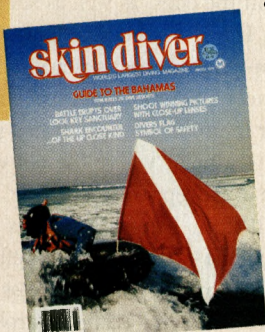
Each month *Skin Diver* looks back through its pages in search of those little nuggets of yesteryear—old equipment, trends of the time, new discoveries—that echo the times and may surprise or shock us. It's good to know your roots and how discoveries of old have helped shape diving of today.

1979

An Intrinsic Element of Surprise

In "Focus on Sharks" (March 1979), Stan Waterman explained that a shark's behavior is never certain. Speaking from years of experience—his work includes *Jaws*, *The Deep* and *Blue Water, White Death*—he wrote,

"Filming sharks in open water requires some degree of nerve (sometimes called 'cool'). More important an instinctive sense of how far one can go with the animal is required." Expertise drawn from personal experience could assist Waterman and other shark-sensible photographers, but even then, success is not guaranteed. At one shoot off San Clemente, safety diver Steve Earley was handling lights for Howard Hall, when a large Blue Shark suddenly "seized Steve's head in his jaws and closed on a mouthful of neoprene hood." With Hall's help, Steve managed to extricate himself from the shark, and "with monumental cool" took up his position again. To reiterate: Nothing is certain—especially when working with sharks. 🐟



1967

Shoot—But Not To Kill

In the March 1967 issue, world-famous underwater photographer and Australian Ron Taylor raved about one of his favorite haunts: Flinders Reef. About 25 miles off his homeland's east coast and 200 miles south of the Great Barrier Reef, the Coral Sea currents wash over the low, flat and rocky reef, bringing the tropics and the subtropics together. Flinders Reef was slowly becoming a place where the spears of spearfishermen were being replaced with underwater cameras. In fact, Taylor noted, "Both [spearfishing and U/W photography] are very similar in approach, you have to get close to shoot...the closer you are, the better the quality." The giant cod that roam the waters at Flinders Reef once grew up to around 400 pounds, and Taylor reported that there used to be a colony of Black Cod until commercial spearfishermen cleaned them out. In 1967, the cods were only reaching 80 to 90 pounds. But Taylor, donning nothing but mask, snorkel and fins, would continue to visit Flinders Reef, following the premise: "Shoot but not to Kill." 🐟



1955

Photography Column Debuts

It didn't take long for the editors and writers of *Skin Diver* to recognize the potential marriage of two favorite pastimes: sport diving and photography. In August 1955, contributor Paul Cherney began a column devoted entirely to the invention and expansion of underwater photography. "The modern skin diver, after all, is also in the very sense of the word, an explorer, and photographs alone will permit closer inspection of submarine views and the knowledge of actual colors below the surface of the sea," wrote Cherney. Using this "type of photo-intelligence," divers would

begin to take a more in-depth look at not only the conditions of the underwater environment, but the needs for advancement in scuba equipment and techniques. The column did not appear in the September issue, but was re-initiated in October 1955, as *Skin Diver's* first column dedicated entirely to U/W photography. The column has metamorphosed through the years and has become known as Ask the Pro, written monthly by *Skin Diver's* own Field Editor Marty Snyderman. 🐟



Every day, divers are humbled by the sheer exhilaration of encountering marine life. From curious Calico Bass and playful dolphins, to sleek sharks and heart-stopping Humpback Whales—to be in their midst is the “stuff” of diving. So, each month, *Skin Diver* guest writers will relive their unique moments under the sea, leaving us at the edge of our seats and aching to get back in the water.

AS A PROFESSIONAL UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER, I spend a good deal of time diving in different parts of the world. Every once in a while, just out of dumb luck, I have an incredible once-in-a-lifetime underwater encounter.

In May 1996, I spent several days diving with sharks around New Providence Island, Bahamas, at a blue water dive site called the AUTECH (Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center) Buoy. This buoy is about 33 feet across, anchored in nearly 2,000 meters of water by the U.S. Navy for use in submarine testing at the Tongue of the Ocean off Nassau.

On the second dive of the day, I jumped off the boat and began a slow descent. When I reached 40 feet, I stopped and waited for sharks to swim by. With the captain chumming the water above, I had little trouble photographing the sharks. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a shape ascend-

ing from the bottomless blue below, about 66 feet away. My dive buddy Brian had also seen it. Swimming as fast as we could, we kept an eye on the shape to determine what it might be. I quickly realized it was a strange species of fish I had never seen. It had an extremely thin, ribbon-like, compressed body which was positioned vertically in the water, with the anterior end pointed up. It had two long “antennae” with what looked like yellow, diamond-shaped fishing lures on the ends, as well as several along the length of each antennae. It had a large plume of strands on its head, which pointed up toward the surface. The body appeared silvery and reflective. Its dorsal fin ran the length of its back, and undulated in order to propel the fish. It had no caudal fin, since the body tapered to a point where the tail would be. The large eyes reminded me of a deep sea creature.

As I approached within 10 feet, I noticed that its antennae were positioned horizontally, one pointing to the left and the other to the right, so that the animal resembled a cross. I fired a shot, but my strobe didn't fire. I tinkered with the strobe cable a bit. As I went to take another shot, the fish began to retreat back into the depths. It first rotated both antennae to vertical, above its head. Then, rather than turn around and swim down head first, the fish undulated its dorsal fin in reverse and swam backward into the blue water, quickly going out of sight. The whole

Deep Sea Rarity

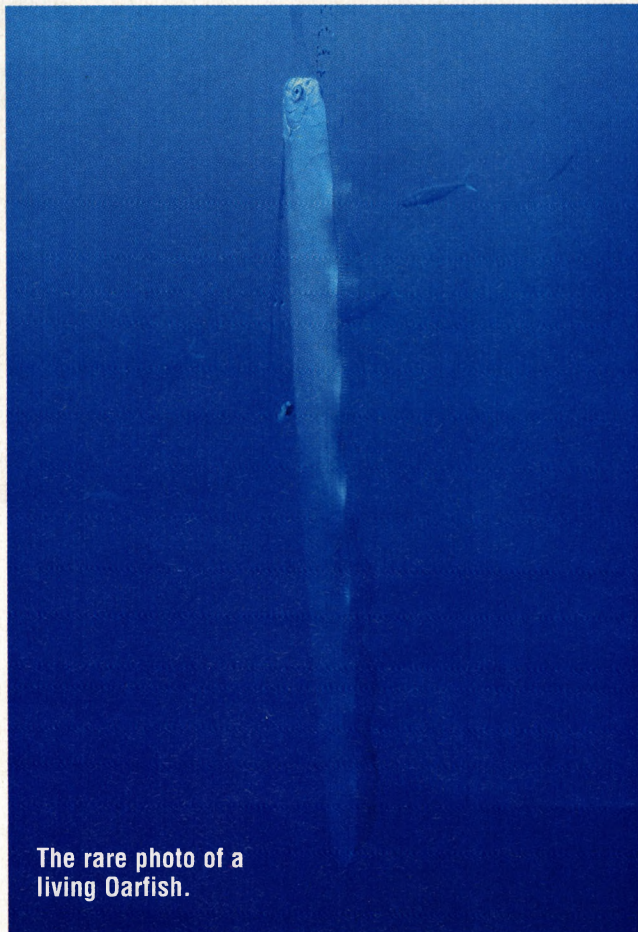
encounter lasted less than 30 seconds. A photographer friend described it aptly as “the ultimate f/8 and be there.”

I only got one picture. After doing some research, I discovered that the fish was a deep-sea fish called an Oarfish (*Regalecus glesne*). It turns out that Brian and I were the only two people to ever photograph a living Oarfish.

The Oarfish may be the animal that precipitated the legends about “sea serpents,” as they reach lengths perhaps as long as 50 feet. The first scientific account of the fish was probably in 1771, when Danish naturalist Morton Brunnich made a scientific note of a beast he found washed up in Norway. The Oarfish, as it came to be known because of its long oar-like pelvic fins, was completely new to science. Few of these fish have appeared over the years, usually found dead at the surface or washed up on a beach, so very little is known of their lives or habits.

The ocean keeps her secrets well, and it is with great irregularity that we get a glimpse into something new. Who knows what other strange and beautiful animals are lurking below, just waiting to be seen for the first time by mankind. 🐟 — B Y

JONATHAN BIRD



The rare photo of a living Oarfish.

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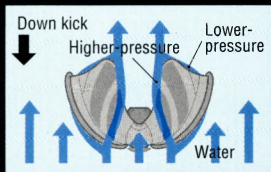
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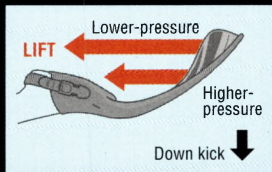
CONVENTIONAL FIN

technical specs

Traditional fins only use repulsive force to create propulsion. This normally means that in order to create strong propulsion, maximum effort is required, resulting in muscle fatigue not only for beginners, women, and middle-aged divers, but professionals as well. Added to which, the body moves left and right in reaction to the kicking needed to move forward, thus reducing propulsion.



The SF-8 has a blade that is split down the middle, so it takes the shape shown in the diagram when kicked under water. This special blade shape creates propulsion (lift) by generating a pressure differential above and below the blade, in addition to the repulsive force created by kicking. The SF-8 is a fin that allows all divers to create propulsion using only a small bent-knee kick, with a light rhythm.



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